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ABSTRACT

This monograph and its companion volume, "Shaping Education Policy in the States," portray the contemporary role of state legislators and map the structure of educational leadership in terms of both the characteristics of influential legislators and staff and the nature of influence structures in state legislatures. An outgrowth of the "State Legislative Education Leadership Study," this volume reports the results from surveys of legislators and staff members in all 50 states. Background information is provided in the form of an overview of the study and of the role legislatures play in education. How legislatures are organized and what kinds of people achieve positions of legislative authority and reponsibility are major focal points. Additional discussion centers on where and how legislators choose to spend time and effort and the relationships among legislators and various groups such as staff, teachers, and state departments. The major functions of legislative education leadership discussed include (1) developing and processing legislation; (2) reviewing the executive budget; (3) overseeing ongoing state programs; and (4) providing services for constituents. The study also touches on conflicts and disputes faced by legislators. Finally, possible trends for the future are offered along with views of what the new generations of legislators might be like. (MHJ)

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Legislative Education Leadership in the States

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Foreword

The educational system in the United States touches the lives of every citizen and reaches all parts of the country. It is the single largest consumer of taxpayer dollars and supports a vast collection of private industries. Changes in educational fashions and methods have a direct and rapid impact upon the future directions of society.

Given its central importance to American society, education—and particularly the politics of education—has received remarkably little scholarly attention.

The Institute for Educational Leadership has as its primary purpose the improvement of educational policymaking through the development of means and mechanisms that promote intelligent discussion of educational policies. Since its inception, IEL has operated on a simple premise: the best way to improve the schools is to improve our knowledge about the schools, and about the complex processes that determine what will happen in the schools.

For this reason, IEL is pleased to publish *Legislative Education Leadership in the States*. In combination with its companion volume, *Shaping Education Policy in the States*, this examination of the patterns of leadership on educational issues offers a particularly timely look at the patterns of policy and power in a time of great flux for education.

Samuel Halperin,
Director
Institute for Educational
Leadership

Preface

The decade of the 1970s witnessed a dramatic expansion of legislative power in the policy domain of education. Throughout the nation, state legislatures began to exercise leadership and in many places they became the predominant force on the educational scene.

This volume, *Legislative Education Leadership in the States*, and a companion volume, *Shaping Education Policy in the States*, portray the contemporary role of state legislatures. They are principal products of the "State Legislative Education Leadership Study," conducted by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University with grants from the National Institute of Education (NIE-G-79-0176) and the Ford Foundation.

Our purpose in this study has been to map the structure of legislative education leadership, both in terms of the characteristics of legislators and staff who exercise influence and the nature of the influence structures in the legislatures of the states. The present volume reports on the overall results of our work, which derive largely from surveys of legislators and staff in the fifty states. The other volume deals more intensively with legislative education leadership in six particular states—California, Florida, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Wisconsin.

These volumes are not the sole products of our study which began in October 1979. As we went along, developing ideas and collecting and analyzing data, we started sharing information with Associates of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), who were conducting education policy seminars in 33 states and who also helped us identify education leaders in their legislatures. We met with them in April 1980 in Annapolis, and discussed leadership in two workshops, and later in October 1980 in Denver, where we reported on some of the most interesting findings from the study. On the latter occasion, we were able to brief top staff of the Education Commission of the States (ECS). Two months later, some of the study's implications were the focus for a session of legislators from seven eastern states at a meeting of the Advanced Leadership Program of ECS in Williamsburg, Virginia.

In disseminating the results of our work, we placed the highest priority on reaching the community of educational policy makers in the states. This community includes members and staff of the legislatures, personnel in state departments of education, representatives of various interest groups, and staff in offices of the governor and state bureaus of the budget. Our aim has been to reach them with articles published in magazines that they ordinarily would receive. Such articles appeared in the summer and fall 1980 issues of *Compact*, which is published by ECS, and in the September 1980 issue of *State Legislatures*, which is published by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). We sent copies of them to more than 400 legislative education leaders and about 150 other individuals who had assisted us in the study.

Practitioners and scholars in the field of politics and education constitute the audience for other dissemination activities. In March, 1980 we presented a paper on legislative education staffing at the annual meeting of the American Education Finance Association and then revised the paper for publication in the May-June 1981 is sue of *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. As of now, we are slated to present a paper on career patterns of legislative staff at the 1981 annual meeting of the American Society for Public Administration. We have also prepared an article on legislative leadership in higher education for a special issue of the *Policy Studies Journal* and we expect to participate in a panel on the changing legislative politics of education at the 1981 annual meeting of the American Education Finance Association.

Dissemination of our findings has been made easier, because of the many people who participated in the "State Legislative Education Leadership Study." We are grateful to all of them for their help and their support.

There are those who did the specific state studies, which appear in the companion volume to this one: Roald Campbell, Adjunct Professor of Education Administration at the University of Utah; Michael Kirst, Professor of Education and Business Administration at Stanford University; Ellis Katz, Acting Director of the Center for the Study of Federalism at Temple University; Richard Lehne, Associate Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University; and Augustus Turnbull, Chairman of the Department of Public Administration at Florida State University.

There are the many individuals in the fifty states who provided information—by means of face-to-face or telephone interviews or mail questionnaires. More than 600 people participated in this way, including 285 legislators and 147 staffers who returned questionnaires (a number of whom were also interviewed in person or by telephone), and 150 other members of the state legislative or education communities who helped us identify particular leaders.

There are the people at the Institute for Educational Leadership, who have collaborated throughout the project—Samuel Halperin, IEL's Director; Phillip Kearney, who headed The Associates Program; the 38 Associates; and Robert Miller, who was responsible for editing our manuscripts and bringing them to press.

Finally, there are those at the Eagleton Institute who worked on the study. Rod Forth managed the processing of the survey data, devoting considerable skill and time to all of the computer-related tasks. Anine Wagenhoffer and Cindy Schultz typed and proofread draft and manuscript with their customary grace and efficiency.

We appreciate the support of NIE, and of Donald Burnes, who heads the Legal and Governmental Studies Team and who served as project officer on the grant, and that of the Ford Foundation, and of James Kelly, a Program Officer in education. Neither NIE nor Ford, Burnes nor Kelly, nor anyone else, however, is responsible for the views and findings that have emerged from our study and which are reported here and elsewhere. The responsibility is ours alone.

Alan Rosenthal
Susan Fuhrman
March, 1981

Chapter 1 Introduction

This book is about American state legislatures and education. It is about the legislators and staff members who play a major role in deciding what education policy will and will not be.

Ten years ago there would have been little reason for the book, and not much to include in it. Legislatures did not involve themselves very much with elementary and secondary schools and probably less with higher education. They left it all to state departments of education, teacher associations, local school boards, colleges and universities, and professional schoolmen.

In the 1970s the situation was changing, and by the end of the decade legislatures were in the thick of policy making in education. Many had wrested the initiative from state departments and interest groups, and most had started to exercise control over the design, funding, implementation, and assessment of education in their states.

One reason for the emergence of the legislature is that the state's role in education expanded dramatically, and at the expense of local educational authority. Financial issues, especially the overburdened property tax and the court decisions on school finance, had much to do with the expansion of state power. So did the changing nature of educational politics, in the context of more fragmented politics generally. A onetime "monolithic education community" had developed internal divisions; and the conflicting demands of teachers, administrators, school boards, and others had to be handled at the state level.[1]

Another reason for the emergence of the legislature is the changes that took place in the institution itself. From about 1965 to 1975 legislatures underwent strengthening and internal improvement, contributing to their resurgence in education as well as in other policy areas. Legislative capacity was enhanced, in particular as a result of the substantial growth of professional staffing, which (as we shall see) has had an important effect on legislatures and education. The distribution of power in the legislature also shifted. With strong, centralized leadership waning, standing committees

gained greater control. The legislature's work habits were transformed. Members began spending more time at their legislative jobs and began working harder at their tasks. Today almost all legislatures are meeting annually instead of biennially, and virtually all of them stay in session longer than before. Specialization and expertise have increased, in education and other policy domains too.

THE STUDY OF LEGISLATURES AND EDUCATION

In view of the negligible part they played, it is not surprising that the research community has paid scant attention to legislatures as they touch on education.[1]

Twenty years ago, as most legislatures were just beginning to develop as modern political institutions, Thomas A. Eliot published an important article in the *American Political Science Review* (1959). The article contended that education was indeed a political enterprise and that the subject of politics and education merited much more study than it had received thus far. Since then the field has blossomed and the states have won recognition as a focal point in the politics and education scene.

Unlike most of their colleagues, a few political scientists did study politics and education at the state level. Among the earliest of their studies were *Schoolmen and Politics* (1962) by Stephen K. Bailey and his associates and *State Politics and the Public Schools* (1964) by Nicholas Masters, Robert Salisbury, and Thomas H. Eliot. The first book examined state aid to education in the Northeast from the vantage point of coalitions of educational interest groups. But it mentioned legislators only in passing and then primarily as targets of influence. The second book also approached its subject from the viewpoint of educational interest groups, this time in Missouri, Illinois, and Michigan. It paid more attention to legislative institutions, viewing legislatures as arenas in which school needs were considered and attempting to isolate the characteristics of legislatures which affected how education issues were decided.

Since then there have been other noteworthy studies of state politics and education. Lawrence Iannacone's *Politics in Education* (1967) concentrated on relations among interest groups, but it brushed lightly over legislatures. The Educational Governance Project at Ohio State undertook a number of single-state studies and produced a major volume, *State Policy Making for the Public Schools* (1976), by Roald F. Campbell and Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr. One chapter by JAlan Aufderheide was entitled "Educational Interest Groups and the State Legislature," but it was concerned with groups and their legislative influence and paid virtually no attention to legislatures *per se*. Further

confirmation of the point that legislatures have been examined only incidentally in the literature on state politics and education is provided by two recent texts. In *The Political Web of American Schools* (1972), by Frederick M. Wirt and Michael W. Kirst, legislatures are dealt with in two paragraphs and in *School Finance: The Economics and Politics of Public Education* (1978), by Walter I. Garms, James W. Guthrie, and Lawrence C. Pierce, they are barely treated at all.

A few other relatively recent research efforts deserve mention. *Educational Policy-Making in the State Legislature: The New York Experience* (1973), by Mike M. Milstein and Robert E. Jennings, and *Social Science Impact on Legislative Decision Making* (1979), by Douglas Mitchell, are examples. Both focus mainly on the attitudes and perceptions of legislators rather than on the structure of the legislative institution. Richard Lehne's *Quest for Justice* (1978) is a case study of process which is concerned with how the court, the legislature, and the executive in New Jersey were involved in producing a new school finance law and an income tax to fund it.

All in all, however, there has not been very much done on state legislatures and education policy, and nothing on legislative leadership in the field. Yet education issues are salient in state legislatures—nowadays as in the past. Surveys in 1963 and 1974 of legislators in the 50 states revealed that education ranked third in mentions as one of the most important issues of the legislative session, roughly equal with taxation and finance.[3] Because of the increasing involvement of legislatures in education, today more than in the past there is a definite need for analysis of legislative leadership. Such analysis should include questions regarding who legislative education leaders are, where they are located, where they get information, the functions they perform, and the impact they have.

THE STATE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP STUDY

The objective of the State Legislative Education Leadership Study, on which this monograph reports, was to map the structure of education leadership in the legislatures of the fifty states. In view of the lack of a research base upon which to build, the objective is straightforward and by no means impossible to achieve. But its achievement is quite important, because it will serve to familiarize the educational policy community, the state legislative community, and the scholarly community with the overall terrain, and it will provide a baseline which can be referred to and used for purposes of comparison in the future.

The mapping here includes two principal components. The first is a simple *description of specified characteristics* (such as the distribution and composition) of both legislators and legislative staff members who comprise the education leadership populations. Individual leaders are certainly important. They exercise substantial impact on education in the states. Their role is nicely described by one of them—a leader from New England:

> When you've done your homework and been out on the firing line, you have earned the right to speak on an issue. And having earned that right to speak, people will by and large listen to you . . . . Inasmuch as a legislator has more access to legislators than anyone else, the influence of a legislator who is accepted as being very knowledgeable in education (or energy or the environment or anything else) is great. That one person has an enormous impact on the flow of legislation.

But examining leadership by individuals is not enough. Therefore, the second component of our analysis is the *specification of legislative education leadership structures* state by state. In our view, the policy maker and the scholar alike can benefit more from knowledge of the structures of leadership in each state than from information about the characteristics and behavior of individual leaders. The dimensions of leadership structures we had in mind as we started related to the institutionalization of educational leadership in the states. They included matters such as professionalism, specialization, continuity, and linkage. As we proceeded, however, changes in design were necessary, and changes from our original notions are reflected in the study as reported below.

This research on state legislative education leadership was conducted over the course of about one year. The stages in the collection of information were as follows:

1. A telephone survey of three individuals in each state in order to identify by reputational method legislative education leaders.
2. Questionnaires mailed to legislators and staff who had been identified as legislative education leaders.
3. Workshop discussions with Associates of the Institute for Educational Leadership, who were conducting programs in 33 states.
4. Follow-up telephone interviews with a legislative education leader from nearly all of the 50 states and staff education leaders from several of them.
5. Intensive studies of legislative education leadership in California, Florida, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Wisconsin.

LOCATING LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Whether the concern is with structural patterns or individual characteristics and behavior, the principal targets of inquiry are legislators and legislative staff who play key roles in the domain of education policy. These are the people who exercise leadership and are considered to be leaders.

It is difficult to define "leadership" as such. There is almost no consensus on what leadership is or on how it operates. Rather, there are a variety of ways of conceptualizing it: as a set of characteristics focusing on skills and competencies; as a set of behaviors in which one individual affects what other individuals do; as specific processes involving those who lead and those who are led; and as the activities of persons in positions of authority.[4] The focus in the present study is on the people who are leaders rather than on the processes that constitute leadership.

Our initial task was to identify education leaders, those people who comprise state education leadership in the nation as a whole and those who comprise it state by state. To discover who the leaders were, we conducted a reputational survey, telephoning three individuals in each state. In nearly every case one of the three was a director of a legislative staff agency, chosen because of his lengthy experience, his knowledge of the legislative process, and his reliability as an informant. Most of these individuals were known personally by the principal investigator. In 28 of the states TAP Associates (but not including Associates who were also members of the legislature) of the Institute for Educational Leadership were also called. Other informants (who were suggested by the staff directors and TAP Associates) included 21 officials of state departments of education, 10 representatives of teacher associations, additional legislative staff directors, scattered state board members, and local school district officials.

Among the few questions posed at this stage, the most important were those asking the informant for the names of leaders in education. The first was as follows:

> I'd like the names of legislators whom you consider 'leaders' in the field of education. By leaders we mean people who can get something done, or perhaps keep something from getting done, in the areas both of educational policy and appropriations . . . . Will you name legislators in both houses whom you consider leaders in the field of education this current session?

We were tapping legislator influence in the domain of education, and inquired as to why informants thought these legislators were influential and whether they also were leaders in two earlier sessions. Another question concerned

individuals who were leaders previously, but not in the current session. Somewhat later in the interview, we posed the question:

Let me also ask about staff members who play an important role in education. Who are they and what are their positions?

In concluding, we asked whether there were any other people whom we should also ask about legislative education leaders in the state.

In the reputational survey a total of 953 legislators and 195 staffers were named. Of the legislators, 228 were named by all three informants and another 180 were named by two out of three. These individuals, together with 12 others who had been named once as a current leader and at least once as a past leader, comprise the group of 420 we define to be *legislator* education leaders. The states range in the number of legislator leaders nominated from Colorado with 16 to Nebraska with three. Of the staffers, 80 were named by at least two informants, while the rest were named by only one. All of them comprise the group of 195 we define to be *staff* education leaders. The states range in the number of staff leaders nominated from New York with 14 to Indiana and Rhode Island with none.

Leader Surveys

Having specified and identified state legislative education leaders, the next stage of our study was surveying both legislator and staff groups with mail questionnaires. Similar, but not identical, questionnaires were developed for legislators and staff. The latter was constructed and mailed out first. The former, mailed out a few months later, was modified in light of our analysis of completed staff questionnaires. In both cases follow-up letters together with a second questionnaire were sent to those who did not respond to the initial inquiry.

Overall the response rates to the questionnaires are remarkably high: 285 of the 420 legislators, or 68 percent; and 147 of 195 staff, or 75 percent. Of the legislators, 44 percent had been nominated by all three informants in the reputational survey and the other 56 percent had been nominated by two. Of the staff, 44 percent had been named by two (or, in a few cases, three) informants and the other 56 percent had been named by only one. These individuals are those whom we shall be analyzing as the nation's legislator and staff leadership populations in subsequent chapters.

We shall also be examining legislative education leadership structures on a state-by-state basis, even though only a few legislator or staff leaders in each state constitute the basis for structural analysis. The numbers of legislators who were nominated at least twice, the staffers who were nominated once, and the numbers and percentages of respondents in each group are shown in Table 1. The numbers and rates vary; in some states there were

few individuals named and in others the questionnaire response rate was low.

In order to describe as reliably as possible the structure of leadership in particular states, we have established conditions for a state's being included in our analysis. For legislators at least two-thirds, or 67 percent, of those nominated as education leaders must have completed questionnaires. Thirty states satisfy this condition, and are indicated by a single asterisk (*) in Table 1. They account for 205 of all the legislator respondents. The average response rate for legislators in these states is 81 percent, including eight with a 100 percent rate, eleven with 80 to 89 percent, seven with 70 to 79 percent, and four with 67 to 69 percent. For staff members, 70 percent or more of those nominated must have completed questionnaires and there must be a minimum of two respondents. Twenty-eight states satisfy this condition, and are indicated by a double asterisk (**) in Table 1. They account for 111 of all the staff respondents. The average response rate for staff in these states

Table 1: Legislator and Staff Survey Response Rates

	Legislators			Staff		
	Number Nominated	Number Respondents	Percent Responding	Number Nominated	Number Respondents	Percent Responding
Alabama	9	4	44	4	2	50
Alaska	12	2	17	3	2	67
Arizona	6	5	83*	4	4	100**
Arkansas	9	7	78*	2	2	100**
California	8	6	75*	11	10	91**
Colorado	16	11	69*	3	3	100**
Connecticut	8	8	100*	2	2	100**
Delaware	7	4	57	3	3	100**
Florida	15	10	67*	10	7	70**
Georgia	7	4	57	4	3	75**
Hawaii	6	3	50	3	1	33
Idaho	7	7	100*	1	1	100
Illinois	6	5	83*	3	2	67
Indiana	5	5	100*	0	0	0
Iowa	8	6	75*	3	3	100**
Kansas	10	5	50	7	7	100**
Kentucky	6	3	50	5	2	40
Louisiana	9	3	33	3	1	33
Maine	5	3	60	3	2	67
Maryland	9	8	89*	8	7	88**
Massachusetts	10	5	50	3	1	33
Michigan	9	5	56	5	4	80**
Minnesota	7	4	57	5	5	100**
Mississippi	11	5	45	1	0	0
Missouri	8	4	50	2	2	100**

Table 1 (cont.)

	Legislators			Staff		
	Number Nominated	Number Respondents	Percent Responding	Number Nominated	Number Respondents	Percent Responding
Montana	6	5	83*	4	4	100**
Nebraska	3	3	100*	4	4	100**
Nevada	10	8	80*	3	3	100**
New Hampshire	6	6	100*	2	1	50
New Jersey	9	8	89*	4	3	75**
New Mexico	8	7	88*	2	2	100**
New York	9	6	67*	14	7	50
North Carolina	6	6	100*	3	2	67
North Dakota	4	2	50	2	2	100**
Ohio	11	6	55	7	5	71**
Oklahoma	11	9	82*	1	1	100
Oregon	8	6	75*	4	3	75**
Pennsylvania	10	8	80*	7	4	57
Rhode Island	8	3	38	0	0	0
South Carolina	7	6	86*	4	2	50
South Dakota	12	8	67*	3	1	33
Tennessee	12	10	83*	2	2	100**
Texas	7	5	71*	6	5	83**
Utah	7	5	71*	2	2	100**
Vermont	14	10	71*	2	1	50
Virginia	5	5	100*	1	1	100
Washington	8	5	63	6	5	83**
West Virginia	7	3	43	3	3	100**
Wisconsin	13	7	54	7	6	86**
Wyoming	6	6	100*	4	2	50
TOTAL	420	285	68	195	147	75

* Indicates that state is among the 30 included in analysis of the structure of legislator leadership.

** Indicates that state is among the 28 included in analysis of the structure of staff leadership.

is 89 percent, including seventeen with 100 percent, one with 90 to 99 percent, five with 80 to 89 percent, and five with 70 to 79 percent. Seventeen of the states are the same for both legislators and staff.

MAPPING LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

This volume describing leadership individuals and leadership structures is based in large part on information collected by means of the legislator and staff surveys. But the questionnaire data do not stand alone. They are sup-

plemented by information from the brief telephone conversations with 150 informants and, even more important, by information from lengthy telephone interviews with about 50 designated leaders after the questionnaires had been returned. In addition, some of the materials from the intensive state studies—in California, Florida, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Wisconsin—are also used in the analyses that follow. Finally, there are the studies by other researchers and the related literature, all of which is brought into the discussion where appropriate.

This is not an exploration of the politics or governance of education in the states. It is not intended to be that. Nor does the study systematically compare education to other policy domains. It is not possible to do that here. We have purposely ignored a lot, in order to be able to examine the subject of particular concern to us—leadership individuals and leadership structures in the field of education in the legislatures of the states.

In this examination, we shall first describe the *formal distribution* of education leadership, in terms of numbers, of chamber, of party, and of committee or top leadership position. We shall then deal with the *composition* of education leadership, including matters of recruitment and continuity. After this comes the *focus* of educational leadership, including the nature of the job, education as a special field of endeavor, and the educational issues of particular concern. Then there is *linkage* of education leadership, by which we mean sources of information, contacts, and organizational involvement. The *function* of education leadership follows and takes into account the performance of four major legislative tasks. Then comes the matter of *conflict* in which education leadership grapples with what stakes people fight over, who gets how much, and who is in control. Our conclusion, which completes the monograph, summarizes findings and offers comments on the future prospects of state legislative education leadership.

CHAPTER 1 NOTES

1. Ellis Katz, "The States Rediscovered: Education Policy-making in the 1970s," *State Government*, 53 (Winter 1980), p. 31.
2. The study of legislatures and education is discussed in Richard Lehne and Alan Rosenthal, "Research Perspectives on Legislatures and Education Policy." Paper prepared for Conference of Law and Government Studies Program of the National Institute of Education, Washington, D.C., January 31-February 1, 1980. This section is based on that article.
3. Wayne L. Francis and Ronald E. Weber, "Legislative Issues in the 50 States: Managing Complexity Through Classification," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 3 (August 1980), pp. 408–411.

4. Margaret G. Hermann, Richard C. Snyder, and Luvern L. Cunningham "Leadership: Some Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities," *Mershon Center Quarterly Report*, 5 (Spring 1980), pp. 1–2.

Chapter 2 How They Are Organized

How education leaders are distributed among places and positions is probably as important to know as anything else about them. Miles' Law, "Where you stand depends on where you sit," is applicable to state legislatures generally as well as to the field of education policy specifically. For the legislator and for the staffer, the particular position held and its location define one's education leadership role.

THE MORE, THE MORE

Before examining the distribution of leaders among various positions, it is necessary to consider how legislators and staffers are distributed among the states, between the two houses, and by political party. It would be natural to expect that "the more, the more" would hold true for each state: the more legislators, the more legislator education leaders; the more staff, the more staff education leaders; and so forth. This type of proposition applies here, but not completely.

The number of members of the legislature has little bearing on the number of legislator education leaders nominated in our survey and covering all 50 states. The correlation coefficient of −.14 indicates no positive relationship between the two variables. In other words, smaller legislative bodies (i.e. California) are as likely to have as many legislator leaders in education as larger ones (i.e. New Hampshire). For staff it is different, however. The larger the legislature's overall staff, the more education staff leaders there are. The correlation between these two factors is .77. This is because virtually all staffers who spend considerable time on education are assumed to exercise some degree of influence. States with few professionals employed—such as North Dakota, Vermont, Idaho, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Utah—have one or two education staff leaders, whereas New York and California with professional complements of over 700 have over ten education staff

leaders. What counts here is the willingness of the legislature to spend money on itself—for member salaries, physical facilities, and personnel. The correlations between the legislature's institutional budget on the one hand and the number of staff overall and the number of education staff leaders on the other are .86 and .69.

Since there are three times as many representatives as there are senators among the nation's 7,500 state legislators, we might anticipate about the same ratio for legislative education leaders. This is by no means so; the ratio is not even two-to-one. Of our respondents 54 percent are representatives while 46 percent are senators. In fact, education leaders are found in every one of the 99 chambers of the states. House education leaders outnumber senate ones (although not always by much) in 27 states; in another 10 the situation is reversed; and in the remaining 13 the number is the same for both chambers. In any case, leadership is almost as likely to be found in the senate as in the house, despite the fact that in each state the latter is substantially larger than the former and despite the fact that senators are less specialized and have more committee assignments than representatives.

We might expect also that the more Democrats/Republicans in the legislature, the more Democrats/Republicans among the legislator education leaders. This does prove to be the case. Indeed, the Democratic Party, with the affiliations of somewhat under two-thirds of the nation's legislators, is represented by 72 percent of the education leaders. This is because Democrats controlled over two-thirds—68 out of 98—of the legislative chambers in the states (excluding Nebraska's nonpartisan unicameral). In all but eight of the 98 chambers the majority party accounted for a majority of the education leaders. The exceptions were the Alaska and Utah senates and the Indiana, Montana, South Dakota, and Washington houses, where more Democrats were nominated despite Republican control, and the Maine senate, where Democrats held a majority but none were nominated. In fact, in 45 of the 67 cases where Democrats had a majority in the chamber there were no Republican minority members among the education leaders; and in 8 out of the 29 cases where Republicans had a majority in the chamber there were no Democratic minority members among the education leaders. In other words, the majority party was ordinarily overrepresented and the minority underrepresented in the ranks of leadership.

POSITION AND POLICY

Legislative bodies are organized along both horizontal and vertical lines. Horizontally, senates and houses are divided into a number of standing committees—ranging from 5 in Maryland's senate to 49 in North Carolina's

house—each with a defined subject matter to work on. The various committees have different jurisdictions over policy domains—one committee over environmental affairs, another health, still another transportation, and one or more over education. In each chamber standing committees are referred legislation that is introduced. They then screen, discuss, and decide whether to report such bills favorably, unfavorably, or to simply let them languish in committee. Committees are the places where a good part of the legislature's policy-making process is likely to take place. There are also committees of a different nature, ones which are not directly responsible for policy. These are the money committees, which are responsible for appropriations and revenues. Depending on the state and the chamber, they are the appropriations, ways and means, or finance committees.

Vertically, senates and houses are arranged according to levels of formal authority, with every member accorded some authority but with some members accorded more than the rest. These positions of formal authority constitute the top leadership, which is chosen by members of the chamber and/or by members of the party caucus. They vary from state to state, but normally include the speaker and majority and minority leaders of the house and the president or president pro tem (if the lieutenant governor serves as president) and majority and minority leaders of the senate. Also in positions of formal authority are the chairmen of the standing committees, who are usually appointed by the top leaders.

Among the legislator education leaders in our study, as the data in Table 2 show, 29 percent were on education committees, another 18 percent were on appropriations (or ways and means or finance) committees, and 26 percent were on both. Those on appropriations committees included members specifically assigned to subcommittees on education appropriations. Another 12 percent were scattered among legislative councils, special commissions and interim committees, and even rules committees. The remaining 15 percent held top leadership positions as president, president pro tem, and majority leader and minority leader in the senate, and speaker and majority and minority leader in the house. In addition, of those serving on education and/or fiscal committees more than half held chairmanships.

EDUCATION POLICY AND EDUCATION COMMITTEES[1]

It has been written that "As an army marches on its stomach, so a legislature stands on its committees."[2] Standing committees are key legislative agencies during the session and are primary work groups between sessions during the interim period. In education, as well as in other policy domains, legislatures have come to rely heavily on their standing committees.

Table 2: The Location of Legislative Education Leaders

Leadership and committee positions	Percentages holding position
In top legislative leadership	15
On both education and appropriations (or ways and means or finance) committees	26
Chairman of education and chairman of appropriations or appropriations subcommittee	(5)
Chairman of education and member of appropriations	(7)
Chairman of appropriations and member of education	(4)
Member of education and member of appropriations	(10)
On education committee only	29
Chairman of education	(16)
Member of education	(13)
On appropriations (or ways and means or finance) committee only	18
Chairman of appropriations	(12)
Member of appropriations	(6)
On other committees or commissions	12
Total	100%

People who are legislative education leaders in the states naturally are members of standing committees that have within their jurisdictions education policies and issues. But education committees do not have the same structure from state to state. Most such committees deal only with education, but in some places they handle other matters as well. Seven senate and four house committees have broader jurisdiction, including health and/or social services or even additional concerns. About four-fifths of the senates and houses have a single committee, which encompasses kindergarten through college. But both chambers in Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Washington, and the senates (but not the houses) in Indiana and Utah and the houses (but not the senates) in Florida, Michigan, and Texas have one committee dealing with K-12 and another with postsecondary education.

The jurisdictions of committees depend on habits, politics, and priorities in the legislative chamber of a state. In Maryland, for example, some years ago both chambers decided to consolidate standing committees and thus wound up with only five in the senate and six in the house. That is one reason why education falls within the purview of the Senate Constitutional and

Public Law Committee and the House Constitutional and Administrative Law Committee. Things are seldom very neat. In Wisconsin, for instance, the senate committee covers a much broader area than does the assembly committee. And in Wisconsin, at least, the narrower focus means a greater involvement in education.

Whether separate committees exist for elementary and secondary education on the one hand and higher education on the other normally depends on idiosyncratic factors in each state. In Illinois the education committees were originally split to provide a member with a chairmanship. Since then the structure has been stable and now is reflective of the contrasting politics in the two arenas. "K-12 is considered a whole different ball game than higher education," according to one staffer, "and they play it differently." A separate committee for each is understandable in these terms. But in addition Illinois has relatively many legislators in each chamber, and continues to have a need for committee seats and chairmanships to distribute among members. With 18 senate and 23 house committees, it is not surprising that there are separate elementary/secondary and higher education committees. Florida is a different case. Here a higher education committee was recently established in the house (but not in the senate), signaling a commitment on the part of the speaker to make postsecondary education a top priority. And he did so. With a tradition of rotating leadership in Florida, it is very possible that the next speaker will have different priorities and decide on an alternative committee structure.

Whatever their specific structure, education committees are the ones through which many of the contemporary issues of education policy pass. Special education, vocational education, competency based education, and sex education (or euphemistically, family life education) all find their way to the education committee and its members. Education committees are seldom the most powerful or the most prestigious committees in a legislative body—rules, appropriations, and judiciary generally rank above them—but they are usually considered to be important. Nearly everywhere these committees have a substantial workload; in a number of places they may be referred several hundreds of bills in a given year. Moreover, education committees have the ability to influence policy on a continuing basis, and many do just this.

On some important issues, such as special education and statewide governance, those who serve on education committees tend to be more involved than anyone else in the legislature. "But they don't really impact that heavily on the *key* issue," a participant in educational politics in a Plains state declared, "that's where money is involved." Where power really resides is

described by a participant from a Midwestern state as follows:

> They can have a nice time in house education and in senate education talking about textbook selection, competency based education, and a lot of other things like that. Not much is going to happen on those things. It's the people who control the money who are calling the shots up and down the line.

In the words of a senator from a Southern state, "Nothing gets done without money, so the finance and taxation committee takes over."

EDUCATION POLICY AND FISCAL COMMITTEES

In recent years the big decisions in education have been mostly financial. What is apparent from our survey of both legislator and staff education leaders is the dominance of school finance as an issue. However, "school finance" does not mean precisely the same thing everywhere and to everyone. It can run the gamut from reforming or revising the overall state aid formula to funding categorical programs like compensatory education. Whatever the precise meaning, money is the measure for three out of four of the legislators and three out of five staffers, who spend a lot of their time on issues of school finance. At the postsecondary level finance is a somewhat different business. It involves complex formulas, legislative review of the budget for higher education, and a combination of coordination by a state board and competition among institutions for resources. But here, too, dollars and their distribution are the major issue. Postsecondary finance commands much of the attention of almost half the legislators and one-third of the staffers.

Different committees control the money in different places. It depends on the structure and process that have evolved in the state—including where the state aid or school finance formula is devised, how the total funding levels are determined, and where decisions on appropriating monies for specific programs are made.

Where the Action Is

One member from an Eastern state was asked, "If a legislator wanted to have the greatest impact over education, would he serve on the education committee or on ways and means?" His reply was to the point: "It would depend on where the state aid formula is devised in each state." In some places it is devised, or at least it is worked over, in the education committee. This is the practice in Minnesota, where responsibility is in the school aids

division (or subcommittee) of the education committee. It is also the practice in Arizona, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, and New Jersey, among other places. In some states —such as Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, South Carolina, and Wyoming—funding formulas run first through education and then through appropriations, ways and means, or finance. California's legislature is schizophrenic in its structure: in the senate responsibility for school finance is with a subcommittee on education of the finance committee; in the assembly the education committee does the funding formula for elementary and secondary schools, while a subcommittee of ways and means handles educational finance involving the colleges and universities. Elsewhere, the education committee's role is minor, and the formula is the responsibility of a money committee. Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin are examples.

Although education committees are normally involved in the politics of school finance, they usually are removed from decisions on just how much money will go into their state's formula each year. Whether the school aid formula is fully funded or not, it is normally up to the committee with jurisdiction over the budget and appropriations to determine the amount of money that will be distributed according to the formula. This is what happens in states like Georgia, Idaho, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. In higher education, moreover, appropriations committees are likely to exercise even greater control. They are less constrained by state aid formulas. Not only can they establish total budgets for postsecondary education, but they also can exercise discretion over allocations made among institutions and programs that are fighting it out for educational funding.

Even specific programs, which would seem to fall within the domain of education committees, from time to time wind up being decided by appropriations, ways and means, or finance. Pennsylvania's appropriations committee acts as a "super committee," which can block proposals for either substantive or fiscal reasons—if that is what the leadership wants done. In most states any bill with fiscal implications, at one point or another in the legislative process, has to be referred to a fiscal committee. And, as a legislator from Maryland put it, "Where you draw the line on whether it's fiscal or not is hard to tell." Many matters, of course, can be settled by the education committees, but some of the most important ones have to proceed further. It may happen that a bill reported by a house education committee wends its way through the process, only to be killed by one or two members of senate finance.

Take the case of a bill before the education committee in Indiana. It involved state funding for counselors in elementary schools. The bill received much discussion in the education committee, but was never voted on. Ways

and means did not want it to be considered separately, because the committee insisted that the counselor issue be dealt with in the context of all the fiscal issues confronting education. Kindergartens provide another example. In Kentucky the education committee endorsed a statewide program, but then the bill was referred to the appropriations and revenue committee, "because we had to see that the money was in the budget." In North Dakota kindergartens have been favored by the education committee for years, but nothing has happened because of the costs involved and the refusal of appropriations to fund the program. Special education, too, can be affected by fiscal constraints. A bill on the subject moved smoothly through three committees in California—assembly education, assembly ways and means, and senate education. But it nearly died in senate finance, despite support for its substance. That was because the senate finance committee, according to a staff member, is "death row" for costly bills, particularly if the department of finance and the legislative analyst both have said the state cannot afford a program.[3]

Fiscal committees are especially critical in states that refuse to mandate programs without providing for their funding. New Hampshire's attitude is, "If we're going to tell them they have to do it, we should pay for it." This keeps the education committee from initiating major programs, unless there is general knowledge that there will be a surplus that year. A program for the handicapped was enacted in 1977 only when it became known that the governor had "five or six million bucks in his pocket." But a bill to establish competency testing in the schools was defeated, in part because no state funds were available to pay for the program.

In addition to legislation which incurs costs and thus gets referred to another committee, educational policy issues occasionally evade the effective jurisdiction of education committees. The reorganization of public higher education in Massachusetts, for instance, followed an alternative process. Although a special commission and the education committees were involved, the critical decisions were made by the chairmen of the senate and house ways and means committees, and the state budget was used as a vehicle. Members of the education committee resisted unsuccessfully. In the domain of education in Massachusetts this was the first major piece of legislation that was handled as part of the budget process and not as part of the conventional legislative process. Or take higher education in California. Here, policy is shaped by the assemblyman who chairs a subcommittee of ways and means and is not reluctant to attach nonstatutory language to budget bills.

In a few places the budget bill is almost a routine method for deciding policy. Wisconsin is probably the most notable example. Here, the state's biennial budget act encompasses more than appropriations. It initiates new programs, modifies established ones, and even allows for tinkering with

relatively specific matters. This gives the joint finance committee considerable power, although perhaps not as much as it had before the individualism of newer members eroded centralized authority in the legislature. Nonetheless, joint finance regards the education committees as a "defender of the educational establishment" and it is not reluctant to take on the major decisions.

Overlapping Memberships

There is a substantial difference between education committees on the one hand and appropriations, finance, and ways and means on the other. There is a difference also in how members of these committees conceive of and pursue their roles. Douglas Mitchell made a nice distinction, as a result of recent research on legislatures and education in three states. According to him, education committee members are more oriented toward "how to solve problems" which are presented to them, while fiscal committee members believe they must decide "which problems should be solved" from among the many alternatives competing for funds. An Arizona legislator expanded on this idea as follows:

> If you serve on Education, you are concerned about education and its programs, and the response of the public to that. If you serve on Finance or Appropriations you become more concerned about other things—education's percentage of the total budget, the general overall tax rates that are going to be required and the effect it's going to have on the general economy of the state.[4]

Among the legislator education leaders in our survey, as is shown in Table 2, 29 percent served on the education committee only and 18 percent served on the appropriations committee only, but another 26 percent were members of both. In some states it is not possible to serve on both committees, because appropriations is considered an exclusive assignment. Thus in Idaho and Wyoming a member is either on one committee or the other. By contrast, in two states, Iowa and Utah, every member of the senate and house is on the appropriations committee in addition to any other committee on which he has an assignment.

Utah is a most interesting case. Education leadership in the legislature is tightly held by a small group, which comprises three cliques—one interested in elementary and secondary education, another in higher education, and the third oriented mainly toward fiscal matters. Two of the education leaders here serve as co-chairmen of the executive committee of the appropriations committee, and all of them are on either the appropriations subcommittee on elementary and secondary education or that on higher education. Most of

Utah's leaders overlap education and appropriations, which probably accentuates the money committee over the policy committee.

Where members overlap committees, they are apt to exercise substantial power in the field of education. A member in Illinois, for example, is characterized as follows: "____ has tremendous influence . . . . He is on the education committee and on the appropriations committee and is one of the movers." The power of the purse explains why the education committee chairman in Ohio had tried for years to get an appointment to finance; he finally succeeded. That is also why a senator in a New England state who was dumped from finance and put on education "was not happy about it."

VARIATIONS AMONG THE STATES

Up till now, we have been discussing education leaders and their assignments on education and fiscal committees. The focus has been on individuals, albeit with their particular states being kept in mind. At this point, it would be worthwhile to examine patterns state by state, in terms of whether leaders in certain states are more likely to be on education or on appropriations committees. Our aim here is to see whether a state's education leadership structure is more policy oriented or more fiscally oriented. If a large proportion of designated leaders are on the education committee and a small proportion are on the appropriations, ways and means, or finance committee, then the structure would seem to be policy oriented. If, however, the distribution is reversed, then the structure would seem to be fiscally oriented. In those cases where about the same number of leaders are members of both committees, the pattern is a balanced one.

Table 3 shows the policy and fiscal patterns in the 30 states for which we have sufficient data. As is shown, some states have what we have termed a predominantly policy orientation. They are Connecticut, Illinois, Texas, and, to some extent, California, Pennsylvania, and Oklahoma. Others have what we have called a predominantly fiscal orientation. They are New Jersey, Oregon, New York, Arkansas, and Indiana and, to some extent Iowa and Virginia too. Several states are balanced at the level where a substantial majority of members are on both committees. These are North Carolina, Florida, Utah, and Arizona. By contrast, Vermont and Wyoming are balanced at the level where less than half are on the two committees. Three more states are balanced at the medium point, and another eight are mixed (medium-low in the table) cases.[5]

FORMAL AUTHORITY

It is not necessary to hold a position of formal authority as chairman of a

Table 3: Policy and Fiscal Orientations of State Education Leadership Structures

	Proportion Designated Leaders on Appropriations Committees		
Proportion Designated Leaders on Education Committees	High (67–100%)	Medium (50–63%)	Low (0–43%)
High (75–100%)	North Carolina Florida Utah Arizona	California Pennsylvania Oklahoma	Connecticut Illinois Texas
Medium (57–73%)	Iowa Virginia	Nevada Maryland Montana	Colorado Tennessee Nebraska South Dakota Idaho
Low (40–50%)	New Jersey Oregon New York Arkansas Indiana	New Hampshire South Carolina New Mexico	Vermont Wyoming

standing committee or a top leader in the chamber in order to exercise influence in education. Two-fifths of the legislative education leaders in our study hold no such authoritative positions. Yet they are influential. A good example is a member of the Florida senate, who had served previously in the house, but had never held a top post. By dint of his hard work, intelligence, and continuing concern, he was recognized for some years as an education leader. Practically any member who has devoted himself to the tasks and gained knowledge over a period of time can achieve influence in a field. Nonetheless authority helps; and three-fifths of those who are perceived to be education leaders also hold formal leadership positions (in large part because they worked effectively to achieve such positions).

As would be expected, many of them serve as chairmen of standing committees. Chairmen usually have considerable authority, if they choose to exercise it. As the data previously reported in Table 2 indicate, 5 percent are chairmen of both the education and appropriations, ways and means, or finance committees, or a subcommittee of one of these fiscal committees,

while another 23 percent are chairmen of education and 16 percent are chairmen of appropriations, ways and means, or finance. Some of the rest, no doubt, chair other committees, whose jurisdictions are not tied closely to education. Whatever the exact assignments, it is clear that a large proportion of education leaders are so designated because they are in positions that enable them to exercise more authority than do their colleagues.

One-sixth of the education leaders also hold top leadership positions in their chambers. Speakers of the house and presidents of the senate and majority and minority leaders get involved in education policy, even though it may not be their principal responsibility. Often leadership support is necessary for something to get done, especially when that something costs money. Although leaders may allow issues to run their course through the jurisdictional committees, as they do in Connecticut, "the really big issues—especially the issues that have fiscal implications—are decided at another level." In Connecticut they are decided by the majority leadership, together with the appropriations committee chairmen and frequently the governor as well. In the Georgia house spending is also controlled by a few people—by the so-called Green Door *ad hoc* committee, which consists of the speaker, speaker pro tem, and the chairmen of appropriations and of ways and means.

Top leaders are more consistently involved in some states than in others. We can get an idea of the structure of their involvement by examining the proportion of responding education leaders who also are top legislative leaders. In Arkansas, Virginia, and Montana it is two-fifths or more; in New Hampshire, Iowa, Florida, New Jersey, Nevada, and South Dakota it is one-quarter to one-third. Even in some of these places—Florida is an excellent example—top leaders can dominate if they so desire, but they delegate power to committee chairmen of their choosing. For the most part, these are the states where relatively fewer members of education committees are among education leadership. By contrast, in a number of states no top legislative leaders are among the education leadership structure. These states include the large ones—Pennsylvania, New York, California, Texas, and Illinois—where specialization is greater among policy domains and where leadership is less likely to concern itself in any sustained way with particular policy areas. In most of these places leadership is more likely to come from the education committees themselves. Sometimes this is because top leadership is not powerful. But in some states leadership is simply not concerned about education. Pennsylvania's party leadership, for instance, is strong but its only interest in education is where it might impact on spending and taxes. The rest it gladly leaves to the senate and house education committees and to the education interests of the state. But party leaders hang on to their power to veto whatever the education community proposes, if the price is too high.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF ORIENTATIONS[6]

Members of legislative staffs who are believed to play an influential role in education policy differ in their perspectives depending largely on where they are positioned and who they work for.

Because there is so much variation from state to state, and sometimes from chamber to chamber, it is difficult to specify staffing patterns in legislatures. One classification specified six types of staff, as follows: (1) chamber staffs, who are responsible for administrative routines and physical facilities in each house; (2) leadership staffs, serving mainly aides to party leaders; (3) caucus staffs, responsible to a party caucus in either the senate or house; (4) member staffs, who assist individual legislators; (5) committee staffs, who provide support to the fiscal and substantive standing committees; and (6) special staffs, all the rest including bill drafters, reference librarians, and auditors and evaluators.[7]

Education staff leaders for the most part fall into the fifth category. They are ordinarily housed in a central service agency and assigned to committees. More than half of them hold positions in a legislative council or legislative research type office or in a legislative fiscal bureau, with the former predominating. Another quarter work directly for an education or appropriations committee and its chairman. The remainder fall into another category. Ten percent are responsible to a senate or house leader or party caucus. Another ten percent are in a legislative audit commission or some other special commission. And one individual, who for some years has been working part time with the legislature as a staff member, is on the faculty of the state university.

Services by education staff are not restricted to a few legislators. They are diffuse, with practically every relevant individual or group receiving assistance. The education and fiscal committees receive a good deal of staff time. That usually means that staff works primarily for the chairman, because he is the most authoritative and involved member of the committee. A staffer from New Jersey indicated that she made information available for all members, but "it's almost inevitable since the chairman controls the agenda, you wind up working for the chairman." Another, from Pennsylvania, described his relationships as follows: "I'm responsive to the subcommittee chairmen and I'm responsive to the members of the committee, but it's clear that my immediate responsibility is to the chairman."

Legislative leaders and party caucuses receive somewhat less time from staff, but they too are not neglected. In Pennsylvania, for example, leadership and caucus are critical in the legislative process. Committee staffs are a part of this partisan operation. On Mondays there is a pre-caucus caucus of senior staff on the policy and political implications of the week's legislation, and

then comes the party caucus. According to the education staffer quoted above, "I think it would be awfully difficult to work in a legislature without being part of the caucus." This may be true in Pennsylvania, but it applies only to those legislatures where the caucus plays a central role.

Finally, there are the rank-and-file members, whose requests include bill drafts, bill analyses, and spot research. Staff puts in time here, and in most places a substantial amount of time. Although their major energies are directed elsewhere, few education staffers can afford to ignore the day-to-day needs of legislators whose concern with education may only be casual but whose needs matter nevertheless.

The orientations of staffers on education issues depend in part on the agency in which they work, but in even greater part on the clients whom they serve. Whether they are employed by a central legislative service agency or on a caucus or committee payroll is not as important as whether they respond primarily to one group of legislators or another. Staff overall serves an assortment of legislator clientele es. But just who gets the most from staff varies from state to state.

The different patterns of staff orientations in terms of who they serve are shown in Table 4. In some states staff works mainly for the senate and/or house education committees, and perhaps interim education committees or commissions as well. Iowa and Kansas, among others, are places where staff takes on a *policy* orientation. In other states staff works mainly for the appropriations, finance, or ways and means committees, which have jurisdiction over education budgets and/or school aid formulas. Utah, Maryland, and Oregon are among the states in which staff takes on a *fiscal* orientation. There are states where staff works largely for legislative leaders, for party caucuses or for the rank and file who are not members of jurisdictional committees. In such places—like Michigan and Washington—staff adopts

Table 4: Orientations of State Education Staff Structures

			Split			
Policy	Fiscal	Political	Policy/ Fiscal	Policy/ Political	Fiscal/ Political	Balanced
Iowa	Maryland	Arkansas	California	Arizona	North Dakota	Connecticut
Kansas	Missouri	Michigan	Colorado	Georgia	Ohio	Delaware
Nebraska	Montana	Washington	Florida	Texas		Minnesota
New Jersey	Nevada		New Mexico	Wisconsin		
West Virginia	Oregon		Tennessee			
	Utah					

what we shall term a *political* orientation. Then, there are states where education staff serves two of the three types of clientele: policy and fiscal, as in California and Florida; policy and political, as in Texas and Wisconsin; and fiscal and political in Ohio and North Dakota. The orientations are *split*.[8] Finally, in Connecticut, Minnesota, and Delaware staff efforts appear to be about equally divided among the three. Orientations in these states are *balanced*.

The distribution of staff orientations, it should be noted, does not correspond with that of legislator orientations. Staff structures that are predominantly policy in outlook are just as likely to be in legislatures with fiscally oriented structures, and vice versa. This is because the amount of effort devoted by professional staff to clients and issues does not necessarily relate to where key decisions are made. Staff in a legislature can be organized along the lines of how labor is divided as well as along those of how power is allocated; and the two are not necessarily identical.

CHAPTER 2 NOTES

1. This section is based in large part on Alan Rosenthal and Susan Fuhrman, "Education Policy: Money is the Name of the Game," *State Legislatures* (September 1980), pp. 4–10.
2. Alan Rosenthal, *Legislative Life: People, Process, and Performance in the States* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), p. 181.
3. Douglas Mitchell, *Social Science Impact on Legislative Decision Making* (Grant No. NIE-G-76-0104, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979), p. 61.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 200.
5. This classification of the states is based on the committee memberships of legislative education leaders who have responded to our survey. In a few cases our classification may differ from that of another observer. Roald Campbell, for instance, points out that Utah should be categorized as having predominantly a fiscal orientation rather than a balanced one, because every legislator serves on the appropriations committee.
6. This section draws on Alan Rosenthal and Susan Fuhrman, "Legislative Education Staffing in the States," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 3 (May-June 1981, forthcoming).
7. See Alan Rosenthal, *Legislative Life*, Chapter 10; also Lucinda S. Simon, *A Legislator's Guide to Staffing Patterns* (Denver, Colorado: National Conference of State Legislatures, August 1979).
8. In his study of Florida, Augustus Turnbull went further in examining the distribution of staff. Of fifteen staffers cited as influential over the decade,

five were directors of education committees, two were fiscal analysts, two were on leaders' staffs, and the others were analysts for education committees. Numbers alone would suggest a policy orientation rather than a split one. It should be noted, however, that whatever the orientation of Florida staffers, it must be one that is responsive to the top leaders who are ultimately in control.

Chapter 3 Who They Are

Those individuals who achieve positions of legislative authority and responsibility make their way to the legislature by different avenues and for various reasons. There are a number of motivations for entering politics and running for legislative office. Whatever the motivational mix, the desire to run does not occur all of a sudden. Typically, it develops over a period of time. Given an opportunity and requisite resources, a person who wants public office will throw his hat into the ring.

Once elected, the legislator must decide how to pursue his job and where to focus his attention. The senators and representatives designated in our study chose, at some point, to spend time and energy on education policy. Some decide before they get to the legislature; others make up their minds after they get there. Whatever other interests they may have, the legislators under scrutiny here are known to be influential in the field of education and they are recognized as legislative education leaders. In this chapter we shall describe the characteristics they have in common, the reasons they pursued education rather than some other subject, and the extent of their commitment to it.[1] We shall also describe—albeit more briefly—the composition of education staff leaders, including their characteristics and career patterns.

RECRUITMENT

Not many people decide to run for the legislature primarily because they want to take part in making policy for the educational system. Other and more general motivations—interest in a political career, ego gratification, public service—normally outweigh specific policy objectives. But at least some of them are committed to education policy even before they are elected. There are those—and an increasing number over the years—whose candidacies have been induced or heavily supported by state and local teacher associations. They surely are expected to play more than a minimal role in education policy. Some, in fact, become acknowledged spokesmen for organized teachers. There are also those—and they presently seem to be on the

increase—who promise in their election campaigns to do something for a special group, such as the gifted, the handicapped, or the vocationally oriented. And then there are those—who also seem to be growing in numbers—who pledge help to the taxpayers in shaping up education and getting more learning for the state's dollars. Usually several factors work in combination to get legislators involved in education policy making. A member of the Illinois legislative staff explains their involvement simply: "It flows from their experience in education to the politics of education to their interest in the big bucks at stake."

Background

Of foremost import is the legislator's background. One's education, occupation, and civic and political experience all make a difference. So does one's familial relationships. Take the case of an education committee chairman from an Eastern state. He is the product of the state's public school system and university, is married to a former teacher, and has children currently in the schools. "So I have some knowledge and a great deal of interest" is how he explained the reasons for his involvement. Another legislator, from New England, comments on how he got into education: "I worked first for the PTA and then on the school board, and I didn't like the legislation that was coming down. It's just a normal chronological sequence of events, as far as I was concerned."

In a number of instances school-age children are in part responsible for one's initiation into the field. In other instances some member of the family—a wife, mother, or father—has been in teaching, and this has an effect. But a large number of legislators have themselves been in education prior to being elected to the legislature, and a substantial proportion continue to have occupational ties to the field. Data on the backgrounds of state legislative education leaders are shown in Table 5.

As far as their own educations are concerned, the legislators are a diverse lot. More of them studied political science as undergraduates than any other subject, undoubtedly evidencing an early interest in politics. Three out of five have done graduate work in either education, political science, public administration, business, or law. Most of these (22 percent), as might be expected, went to law school, but almost as many (17 percent) studied at the graduate level in education or educational administration.

For many of them experience in education continued beyond their own schooling. Of the leaders surveyed, 43 percent had at one time or another held a position in the field of education. As Table 5 shows, almost a third had worked as teachers, a fifth had served on school boards and another fifth

Table 5: The Backgrounds of State Legislative Education Leaders

A. Education and Training

Field of Study	Percentages Undergraduate	Graduate	Both
Education and educational administration	7	9	8
Political science	21	5	5
Public administration	3	5	1
Business and business administration	13	1	4
Law	1	19	3

B. Experience in Education

Positions held	Percentages*
Elementary or secondary teacher	29
Elementary or secondary administrator	10
Postsecondary administration or faculty member	20
State or local school board member	19
University or college trustee	10
Other	7

C. Current Occupation**

Occupation	Percentages
Education	23
Business	27
Attorney	22
Farmer	6
Health Professional	4
Engineer	3
Researcher	3
Housewife	2
Rancher	2
Other	8
	100%

* Some individuals held more than one position.

** If individual is a full-time legislator, then occupation is one held immediately prior to devoting full time to the legislature.

had worked in postsecondary educational institutions, while a tenth had been employed as school administrators and another tenth had served as university or college trustees. And there must have been others, less directly attached

to education, who do not show up in these figures. But they also had experience, much like the chairman of the education committee in a Western state, an engineer who had designed hundreds of schools, and thus "felt a certain familiarity with the area."

For most people being a legislator is still not a full-time job, although it has become more and more demanding in recent years. Three-fifths of the education leaders regard their legislative jobs as part time, while some of those who regard it as full time have other employment as well. In terms of their current or immediately prior occupations, the education leaders are divided roughly into four groups—businessmen, attorneys, educators, and all the others (farmers, health professionals, etc.). What is obvious, but quite understandable, is the overrepresentation of those with educational occupations among the legislative education leaders. While about 10 percent of the total number of legislators in the country are in education, 23 percent of the leaders being examined here are in that field. Educators naturally gravitate to education, just as those in other occupations try to pursue their specialties while serving in the legislature.

District

A legislator's district also has bearing on his interest in education. In some states it has simply been good politics to be well informed about education, because that is what concerns people. "It's the number-one issue as far as our constituents are concerned," is the way a legislator from South Carolina put it. In Utah it is a most prestigious arena. And in Iowa three of the major interest groups— teachers, school board members, and farmers—watch education closely. Legislators who know education can relate well to these groups. When they are at home on weekends during the course of the legislative session, they can tell them, "We're working on those issues right now." In some places it is good politics specifically to be involved in education—in order to keep or gain the support of a well organized teachers association or to appeal to a particular group with special needs or concerns. By serving on the education committee, Pennsylvania legislators can benefit by building up "political chits" from the state education association.

There is nothing extraordinary about the districts represented by the legislator education leaders. They tend to be more, rather than less, urban than average in the state. Yet, fewer than one-tenth are relatively low income or impoverished, only one-fifth have relatively large minority populations, and only one-quarter are lower than the state average in their property wealth per pupil. The large majority of their districts, according to the legislators surveyed, have about as many children with special needs as anywhere else in the state.

When it comes to higher educational issues, however, the district connection is clear and direct. When the campus of a state college or university is located in a legislator's district, there may well be additional cause for him to become involved in education policy. Any politician will feel a particular obligation toward such an institution, and some will position themselves so that they can do as well as possible on its behalf. In some states practically every member in the senate and a substantial segment in the house represent a higher educational institution of one kind or another. A legislator can represent a campus in his district without broader or sustained activity in education. And most do. But among the legislator education leaders examined in this study, nearly half have a state university or state college in their district. With respect to a number of these legislators—and particularly among the 28 percent whose districts included a state university—the higher educational facility back home probably had something to do with their overall involvement. In Florida, at least, a number of legislators have been lured into education leadership because of the universities located in their districts.

Policy and Practice

In addition to individual characteristics and district factors, policy concerns and legislative practices also play a role in the recruitment of education leaders. Legislators develop a sense of what policy domains are most important. Frequently money and importance overlap, and there is a great deal of money at stake in education. A legislator from a Midwestern state became more and more involved because, as he expressed it, "I wanted to do something about what was happening to all that money besides squawk." He came in through the funding door and developed expertise in other areas "more by accident than by design." Another legislator, from a New England state, recalled his entry into education policy over a decade ago: "It was a field that I felt was emerging, moving towards the center stage of the legislative process, and I wanted to be part of it."

Normally, a legislator does not decide at a particular point in his career to become a leader in the field of education. He may be assigned to the education committee and his involvement there feeds his interest. The more time he stays with a subject such as education, the more his interest in it is likely to increase. On occasion an individual, who previously had shown little interest, will find himself appointed to an authoritative position and feel compelled then to play a major role. One legislator in New Jersey, for instance, wanted to chair the transportation committee, but was awarded education instead. He quickly acquired a grasp of the subject and exercised education leadership as

chairman, later as majority leader, and finally again as chairman of the committee. On occasion, too, an individual may be specially recruited by someone already in the field.

State Representational Patterns

Of all the factors that determine the composition of a legislature's education leadership, perhaps the most important is occupation. Whether or not a legislative education leader is also an educator by occupation is believed to make a big difference.

Educators who are inclined to specialize in education may represent the interests of education or of some segment of the educational community. Those who have been teachers, it is said, almost invariably reflect their callings when deciding on public policy. The leader in Pennsylvania who served as president of the state teachers association cannot help but be influenced by experience in his previous position. An Oregon legislator described the difference that background and experience make:

> I'm a teacher. I and the rest of the educational community are interested in improving education. The task force studying basic competencies had three or four legislators on it . . . . And we concluded that if this program was going to be effective or useful, it should be doing something that would improve education.[3]

The perspective of educators who comprise a sizable proportion of the education leadership no doubt is helpful in the legislative process. But it tends to be particularistic and can become worrisome if the education community is too heavily represented. A non-education chairman of an education committee expressed the fear of dominance by the profession: "I don't want a bunch of firemen to be fire commissioners and a bunch of policemen on a police review board. And I don't want a bunch of teachers on the education committee . . . . They should be there, but in limited numbers."

Education leaders are more significant actors than education committee members. It is worth inquiring, therefore, into the incidence state by state of the educational occupations that comprise the structure of leadership. The results are reported in Table 6. Out of 30 states under scrutiny, in four the proportion of education leaders whose occupations are in education is relatively high, from 38 percent to 60 percent. Among these are states like Pennsylvania, where organized education is strong, and also states like Wyoming, where organized education is weaker. In ten the proportion is not quite as high, at 25 percent to 33 percent, and in eleven it is lower at 10 percent to 20 percent. At the low end are five states where none of the

Table 6: Educator Representation in State Education Leadership Structures

Proportion of Leaders with Educational Occupations			
High (38–60%)	Medium High (25–33%)	Medium Low (10–20%)	Low (0%)
Connecticut	California	Arizona	Indiana
Illinois	Colorado	Arkansas	Oklahoma
Pennsylvania	Idaho	Florida	South Carolina
Wyoming	Nebraska	Iowa	Texas
	Nevada	Maryland	Virginia
	New Hampshire	Montana	
	New York	New Jersey	
	North Carolina	New Mexico	
	Oregon	South Dakota	
	Utah	Tennessee	
		Vermont	

education leaders responding to our survey were professionals in the field of education. Most of these states were in the South or Southwest.

CONTINUITY

Generally speaking, by whatever paths people arrive at legislatures, they do not stay very long. This applies more to legislators than to staff, but relatively high turnover is characteristic of both groups.

Years ago, the turnover of legislators was rapid and the proportion of first-term members was high. Today turnover is less in most legislative bodies in the nation. But while the proportion of new members is lower than previously, the proportion of members with long tenure is also lower. Few make a career in the state legislature any longer. Most run for higher office or are defeated for reelection or just decide to take their retirement pensions and return full time to their outside occupations. At the present time, perhaps two out of five senators and one out of five representatives have been in the legislature for ten years or longer.

Legislative education leaders, however, depart from this norm. They have been around for some time, working in the field of education, and exercising leadership. Until now, they have brought substantial continuity to the education policy enterprise.

Seniority and Experience

Legislators who exercise leadership in education are a relatively senior group. Only about 20 percent have five or fewer years of service; a third have between six and ten; another third eleven to fifteen; and the remaining 16 percent over fifteen years. These members as a group have served much longer than average. Practically all have had lengthy tenure on education committees, fiscal committees, and special commissions and task forces. Indeed, the overwhelming majority who are education leaders today have also been education leaders in recent years. They are neither new to the legislature, to their positions, nor to their influential roles.

As far as individual states are concerned, the average years of legislative service of education leaders is considerable just about everywhere. Thus, the structures of state legislative education leadership are heavily weighted toward seniority, as the data in Table 7 reveal. Led by Arkansas, six states average twelve years or more of legislative service; another twelve average ten or eleven; nine range from seven to nine; and in only three of the total is the average less than seven years.

Legislative education leadership structures not only are senior, they are also continuous, having been composed of approximately the same individuals over an extended period of time. In examining the continuity of leadership, we inquired into whether those currently designated as education

Table 7: Seniority of Legislative Education Leadership Structures

Average Years of Legislative Service			
High (12 to 21)	Medium High (10 to 11)	Medium Low (7 to 9)	Low (4 to 6)
Arkansas	New Mexico	South Dakota	Florida
Virginia	New York	Nebraska	Indiana
New Hampshire	Nevada	Vermont	Connecticut
Pennsylvania	Oklahoma	North Carolina	
Montana	Maryland	Iowa	
Utah	Oregon	Wyoming	
	South Carolina	Illinois	
	New Jersey	Idaho	
	Tennessee	Colorado	
	California		
	Arizona		
	Texas		

leaders had been playing the same role for several years, since at least 1975. If we consider all 50 states, in one third of them every current leader was also a leader a few years ago; in more than half the total, at least three out of every four leaders had a similar role earlier; and in another four states, at least three out of five had been serving for several years. Only one state—Kentucky—had little continuity, with only one out of three experienced in their education leadership roles.

Once they get into it, members tend to stay with education. In the words of a Midwestern legislator, "By and large education people continue to serve on education and continue to be spokesmen for education programs." Or as a legislator from a Southern state expressed it, "After they start on the education committee, they stay there." Even if they leave the education committee, their interest in education persists. Take the case of a Midwestern representative. He was first on the education committee, then on finance, and soon after became majority leader. His concern and leadership in education did not stop. Or take the case of one of the legislators in the Florida house. His interest continued to be strong from the time he served as a member of the education committee, to his chairmanship of that committee, and then to his chairmanship of the education subcommittee of appropriations.

Legislators continue with education for the same reasons that they begin—their backgrounds, their districts, and the significance of the problems. In addition, as they work in the area they develop expertise, which serves them and their colleagues well. Especially those who take on school finance—the complicated formulas and the "ins" and the "outs" of funding mechanisms—would not casually abandon a field with which they struggled in order to learn. In any legislative body there may be only two or three people who can deal with the funding formula, and they are apt to stick with it. "They have to remain active," pointed out a legislator from a Midwestern state, "because there is no one else in their caucus to deal with that issue."

There are exceptions, however; some people do move out of the ranks of education leadership. In a New England state, one pattern is described as follows:

> There was a member who served with me on the education committee for a number of years and left to go to ways and means, because he thought it would be more prestigious. Then he left ways and means to become chairman of a committee that deals with civil service . . . . And so the ones that leave do so either to go to ways and means—which is somewhat prestigious for them—and end up sort of watching education legislation in ways and means. The other ones leave to go to another committee or a chairmanship, and they tend not to spend very much time on education once they leave.

There is the example also, from another state in New England, of the education leader who has been trying to get on the fish and game committee since he joined the legislature. He explained how he had been unable to move: "Last time around I told the speaker, 'I don't want to be on the education committee, I'd like to be vice chairman of fish and game.' He said, 'No, I need you on the education committee with all the educators.' " Probably at some point, however, he will succeed in moving away from education. Like some others, this individual appears to be burned out in education and has a more compelling interest in another subject. Some members—including a few in Wisconsin—plan to reduce their involvement, because the nature of the issues and politics have changed. Education is no longer "untouchable."

There are other explanations for the departure of education leaders. In our initial reputational survey, we asked respondents to identify former education leaders and inquired as to why they no longer were in the same position. We were told that over one-third of them had decided not to run for their legislative seat again, about one-sixth had run but been defeated, and one-fifth or so had been elected or appointed to another office. Three had died and two had gone to jail. A few lost their education leadership roles when their party lost control of the chamber or when their party's leadership was overthrown. But the important thing is that most had stayed on.

Career Prospects

In view of their lengthy tenure, it is to be expected that the education leaders are a relatively old group. They are, particularly in comparison with other members of contemporary legislatures, whose average age has been declining in recent years. Only 0.4 percent of the education leaders are in their twenties and only 17 percent in their thirties, while 27 percent are in their forties, 34 percent in their fifties, and another 22 percent in their sixties. In about half the states the average age of education leadership is in the forties and in the other half it is in the fifties. In Idaho and North Carolina the average is in the sixties.

Given factors of age and tenure, it is unlikely that the present generation of legislative education leadership will be around much longer. As has happened in the past, some will be defeated for reelection and a few may still try for higher office. No doubt, many will soon retire from the legislature to return to private life. When asked how much longer they hoped to serve, only 20 percent responded as long as two, three or more terms after their present one. Another 33 percent looked forward to only one more term, while 16 percent indicated that their present term was their last one. The remainder—31 percent—were undecided or not sure. Within a few years, then, the

contemporary generation of education leaders will have turned over. In terms of what individuals themselves anticipate (not to mention other factors that might intrude), it would appear that substantial turnover of the present education leadership will probably be occurring shortly in California, Colorado, Maryland, Montana, and North Carolina, among other states.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF[3]

The staffers who wield influence in the field of education are different in composition from the legislators whom they serve. Legislative staffing is their occupation; and at the moment, at least, they have no other. It is a job for which relatively few have trained and a position to which most have moved by chance.

Getting the Job

Most of the education staffers have advanced degrees. Half have earned a master's and one out of ten completed law school. Among the rest, about 15 percent have a Ph.D. or Ed.D. Only one-quarter of the total have as their highest degree a baccalaureate. Their substantive educational backgrounds are generally similar to those of the legislators in the field. One-quarter have studied education, almost as many have been in political science, and about half as many have concentrated in public administration and business administration. Another quarter have been spread among a number of disciplines.

Few of them planned on education policy as a field, and just as few planned on staffing a state legislature. The individual who earned a Ph.D. in higher educational administration, spent several years working for the board of regents, and then moved over to the higher education committee in the legislature is an exception. Otherwise staffers simply fell into the jobs they now hold. They were hired by a legislative service agency (or party leadership) as they happened by and were assigned to work on education because there was an opening or a need there.

For relatively few of them was this their first full-time job. Many had worked for years in other positions. Some were university administrators or professors (15 percent), some were elementary and secondary school teachers or administrators (11 percent), others were in some agency of the executive branch (17 percent), a few were in the state department of education (5 percent), a number were aides to individual legislators (15 percent), and a number were in research of one sort or another (16 percent). Only 5 percent had come to their positions right out of college or from graduate training.

Some cases from around the country will illustrate the haphazard nature of staff recruitment.

- A college instructor in New Jersey whose husband relocated could no longer commute to the campus. She applied to a legislative service agency, not knowing quite what to expect.
- Another individual took a civil service exam for an entry level position in California state government. After interviewing for a state administrative job in Sacramento, he walked across the street to the capitol building and into the legislative analyst's office, and asked if a job was available there. He was called back in two weeks.
- A CPA in Montana had to move when her husband finished graduate school and had a chance for a good position in Helena. She was offered a job with the legislature after someone else turned it down. "I guess I just happened to walk in at the right time, just when the other person declined to accept," was the way she explained her recruitment.
- An individual in Pennsylvania who had worked previously as an assistant professor of English literature was seeking a job as a college dean. Not much was available, but by chance he was offered a job in the legislature.
- On the way to Washington to interview for a job with the national office of the League of Women Voters, a woman who had received her MA degree from the University of Wisconsin stopped off in Madison to visit with a former professor. He suggested that she might be interested in a job on the legislative council staff at the capitol. "Either the job interested me or I just liked Madison, so I stayed" is her explanation of how years ago she got to where she is now.

Only in a minority of cases have people been hired specifically with education policy in mind. The norm has been to employ people for one job or another and then to shift them to education when a slot opened up there. Sometimes a person retired or moved on. The Wisconsin staffer mentioned above was assigned to fill in when the person handling education had become ill. She wound up spending years working for the legislative council study committee on education, but she got there purely by accident. "I was interested in education," she said, "but it's never been a goal, or anything in that sense." And in the past, at least, with the development of legislative capacity and the expansion of legislative staff, new positions have been established in a variety of policy domains. Education has been among them.

Staff Careers

One staffer who has exercised influence on education policy for a number of years explained why she stayed interested in the subject for so long.

Education is so varied, she noted, "that it was hard to get bored." The legislators, agency personnel, and lobbyists in the field were all very committed, and in her opinion, they were extremely interesting to work with. By continuing with a particular area, she continued, "you necessarily get very well informed and you kind of have your old boys and old girls network, so your effectiveness goes up and you are inclined to want to hang onto it." If a staffer develops competence at something, she concluded, there is simply little reason to shift to something else. Or as another staffer summed up, "The longer you stay in a particular field, the more valuable people perceive you to be." This is certainly an effective way for professionals to increase their influence.

Although they are younger than the legislators whom they serve, the education staffers are not that youthful. They range in age from 22 to 62. While one-fifth are in their twenties, almost half are in their thirties and another third are over forty, including a number in their fifties. The latter tend to be the agency directors, who do not have primary assignments in the field of education, but nonetheless exercise influence by virtue of their administrative positions, their previous involvement in education, and their reputations.

A large proportion of these staff leaders have had years of experience in the field. Over two-fifths have worked in their present agencies or positions for over five years, and thus know their way around the legislature. Three-fifths of them have worked on education policy more than five years, which is long enough to get a good grasp of the subject. Staff averages for 28 states are indicated in Table 8. In eighteen of them staff leaders average six, seven, eight, nine, or ten years working in education. In eight other states they average four or five years. In only two states—Connecticut and Missouri—is there little staff experience in this domain.

Whatever their past experience, the future careers of many of these professionals are uncertain. They are mobile individuals, looking for better positions and hoping that something becomes available. Most are very satisfied with their jobs (and with the influence they seem to wield). Even after five or more years at the enterprise, little is dull or routine. But one problem they face is that there are few supervisory staff positions in legislatures, and those who hold such positions are inclined to remain in them. To move up, they usually have to move out. Some intend to do so from the beginning. A staffer employed by a higher education committee from a Southern state (where staff turnover is comparatively high) had a definite career in mind. He had done graduate work in higher education, worked for the regents, and wanted an administrative position in a postsecondary institution. "If you look at my career," he said, "that's a fairly standard kind of thing—less a reflection on the legislative environment and more of a reflection of the need to move

Table 8: Experience of Legislative Education Staff Leadership

Average Years of Work in Education Policy			
High (8 to 10)	Medium High (6 to 7)	Medium Low (4 to 5)	Low (1 to 3)
Michigan	Arizona	Florida	Connecticut
Minnesota	Arkansas	Maryland	Missouri
Utah	California	Montana	
	Colorado	North Dakota	
	Delaware	Tennessee	
	Georgia	Texas	
	Iowa	Washington	
	Kansas	West Virginia	
	Nebraska		
	Nevada		
	New Jersy		
	New Mexico		
	Ohio		
	Oregon		
	Wisconsin		

up." Another staffer, from a Western state, was open-ended in his objectives. "I think people ought to have two or three different careers during a life time, and I don't want to have just one in government." He was thinking of going into consulting, albeit in the field of education.

Although it is difficult to ascertain staff career ambitions through a structured interview or questionnaire, we tried by asking about the kind of job individuals would likely have three years from now. Approximately half of the staffers who responded thought they would not be doing the same job in the same agency as they are doing now. They would appear to be willing to move. What do they have in mind, where do they hope to go? About one-third conceive of a different position in their legislature and two-fifths look forward to working in the executive branch. About one-third would want an academic job in a university or educational research or consulting. One-fifth have employment with the federal government in mind. Few appear interested in moving to another state or working for an educational interest group or at the local level in their own state. Most would seem, however, to want to remain in the field of education. Only a couple admit to ambitions for elective office.

Whatever the staffers aspire to, opportunities are limited and might never arise. A number of these professionals undoubtedly have remained in their

present positions longer than they had anticipated, and—with jobs relatively scarce as they are now—others will continue to do so. If they do leave their positions, they are apt to leave within three, four, or five years. After that, chances are greater that they will stay in place.

CHAPTER 3 NOTES

1. Material on legislators in this chapter is reported briefly in Alan Rosenthal and Susan Fuhrman, "Shaping State Education Policy," *Compact*, 14(Fall, 1980), pp. 22–23, 27.
2. Quoted in Douglas Mitchell, *Social Science Impact on Legislative Decision Making* (Grant No. NIE-G-76-0104, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979), p. 202.
3. Based in part on Alan Rosenthal and Susan Fuhrman, "Legislative Education Staffing in the States," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 3 (May-June 1981, forthcoming).

Chapter 4 What They Focus On

Political scientists have concentrated much of their attention on decision making by legislators. Their usual method in this research has been to examine roll-call votes on bills brought up on the floor of the senate and the house. Occasionally their approach varied, and they employed other means to discover factors that relate to what legislators decide and why they do so.

Decisions by legislators on how to vote, while susceptible to research, are not necessarily the most difficult nor the most important decisions they make. Particularly those who take on leadership roles—either in top positions in the chamber, as appointed chairmen of committees, or by virtue of their efforts in some policy domain—have other and more significant kinds of choices to make. One kind has to do with the question of "focus"—where and on what they choose to spend their time and effort.

In Chapter 3 we have already touched on matters of choice, in examining how legislative education leaders are recruited to and retained in leadership ranks. Here we shall inquire further, considering the extent to which education leaders, including both legislators and staff, focus on their jobs in general, on education policy in particular, on special interests within the policy domain, and on particular issues that emerge during a legislative session.

THE JOB

Twenty years ago few legislators spent full time at their jobs; ten years ago there were not many more. By now, however, a number of legislatures have become almost full time. California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania are probably the leading examples. In these places nearly all the members spend much of their working time on their jobs as legislators. It is still possible for a number of them to manage an outside

business or profession, which they pursue between legislative sessions, interim meetings, and politicking in the district. But an increasing number of members, especially in the states mentioned above, are full-time legislators with virtually no other pursuits.

In the majority of today's legislatures—whether they assemble through most months of the year, annually for ninety or sixty days, or even on a biennial basis—some proportion of members are committed to their jobs on practically a full-time basis, even though their colleagues may not be. Naturally, legislators who tend to be so committed are the leaders—the top leaders in the chamber, some of the committee chairmen, and those who may be heavily involved in one policy area or another. Many of the education leaders whom we are studying here fit into this category. When asked if they consider themselves to be full-time legislators, about two out of five replied that they did. That is a much larger proportion than for legislators overall, although probably not for legislative leaders or for leaders in other policy domains. Predictably, there is a wide range among the states in the commitment of education leadership, as is shown in Table 9. In California and Pennsylvania all the education leaders think of themselves as full time, while in Connecticut and New York nearly all of them do. By contrast, in Indiana, Iowa, Montana, South Dakota, and Wyoming all the education leaders think of themselves as part-time legislators. Their commitments are divided between the legislature on the one hand and some pursuit outside on the other.

Table 9: The Commitment of Legislative Education Leadership

Proportion of Leaders Identifying as Full-Time Legislators			
High (83–100%)	Medium High (40–75%)	Medium Low (10–40%)	Low (0%)
California	Arizona	Colorado	Indiana
Connecticut	Arkansas	Idaho	Iowa
New York	Florida	Nevada	Montana
Pennsylvania	Illinois	New Hampshire	South Dakota
	Maryland	New Mexico	Wyoming
	Nebraska	Oklahoma	
	New Jersey	Oregon	
	North Carolina	South Carolina	
	Texas	Tennessee	
		Utah	
		Vermont	
		Virginia	

Whether they consider their commitments to be full- or part-time, there is no question that the education leaders surveyed here spend a substantial number of hours each week on their legislative jobs. They spend time not only when the legislature is meeting in session at the capitol, but also in the interim periods, between sessions, when standing and special committees are at work and when they are more apt to be studying legislative problems than screening legislation.

The length of sessions ranges greatly among the states. In Wyoming about 70 days are spent in actual session during a biennium, in Nevada 80, and in Montana 90. At the other end of the continuum are California which meets about 300 actual legislative days, Michigan about 250, and New York and Pennsylvania over 150. Legislative education leaders, like many of their colleagues, spend full time or more on their jobs when the legislature is in session. As data in Table 10 (A) show, three-fifths put in over fifty hours a week and another fifth put in forty-one to fifty hours a week during these periods. Whether concentrated in a three- or four-day week (as in many states for most of the session) or extending over six days (as in a state like Montana), this constitutes a great deal of time.

The term "interim," which means the time between sessions, is applicable in nearly all the states. In most it refers to the day from which the legislature adjourns one year until the day it convenes the next (or, in the case of biennial legislatures, when the newly elected legislature meets). In some, such as New Jersey, it covers the periods when the legislature recesses for the joint appropriations committee to consider the budget and when the legislature quits work for the summer. In other states, which meet on and off throughout the year, it pertains to the recesses inbetween actual sessions. Such interim periods are used mainly by committees for the study of problems, the formulation of legislation, the oversight of programs, and the review of budget and expenditures. Education leaders spend less time on the job during these periods, as is shown in Table 10 (A). Only 8 percent put in over fifty hours a week, another 8 percent put in forty-one to fifty, and about the same put in thirty-one to forty. Altogether three-quarters, however, spend fewer than thirty hours per week, with one-quarter spending ten hours or even less.

Considering the time spent on the legislative job by education leadership structures, as is done in Table 11, contrasts among the 30 states are clear. At one extreme are California, Florida, Maryland, and Texas, where the time devoted to the legislature is high year round. Not too different are New York, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. (In all of these states half or more of the education leaders perceive of themselves as full-time legislators.) At the other extreme are Montana and Vermont, where the time devoted to the legislature is relatively low year round. Not too different from them are Wyoming, New

Table 10: Time Allocations of Legislative Education Leaders

(A) Hours Spent Per Week on Job as Legislator

Session Hours Per Week	Percentages of Education Leaders During Session	During Interim
10 hours or less	1	26
11–20 hours	6	28
21–30 hours	6	21
31–40 hours	8	9
41–50 hours	18	8
Over 50 hours	61	8
Total	100%	100%

(B) Proportion of Time Spent on Education Policies and Issues

Proportion of Legislative Time	Percentages of Education Leaders During Session	During Interim
50% or more	28	24
About 40%	14	9
About 30%	22	15
About 20%	21	21
About 10%	11	18
Less than 10%	4	13
Total	100%	100%

Mexico, Idaho, Nevada, and Iowa, where leaders spend relatively little time at their jobs when they are not in session.

THE FIELD

Legislators are designated education leaders because of their influence in the field of education. That influence may derive in large part from the key positions they hold—such as speaker of the house, majority leader of the senate, or chairman of the appropriations committee—rather than from the amount of time they devote to education or the amount of work they do in the field.

Legislators are and must be generalists. Leaders and rank and file alike have to attend to all sorts of legislative issues and deal with constituent problems of various types. It is, of course, possible to specialize in one field

Table 11: Time Spent on the Job by Legislative Education Leadership

Average Hours Per Week During Interim	Average Hours Per Week During Session: High (50 to 55)	Medium (40 to 50)	Low (30 to 40)
High (25 to 55)	California Florida Maryland Texas	New York Illinois Pennsylvania	New Jersey
Medium (15 to 25)	Virginia Nebraska Oregon Indiana Colorado Arizona Oklahoma	North Carolina Connecticut Tennessee	Arkansas South Carolina New Hampshire
Low (5 to 15)	Utah South Dakota	Wyoming New Mexico Idaho Nevada Iowa	Montana Vermont

or another; but few legislators will neglect everything else for some preferred area of public affairs. Their constituents do not encourage it and the nature of the legislative enterprise does not facilitate it. The nature of the committee structure and the diverse responsibilities of top leadership work against overly intensive specialization for members serving any length of time. As a member from an Eastern state commented: "You have to develop a balanced set of interests. If you become too much of an expert, you find that your own career becomes limited."

Nonetheless, we would expect education leaders to be more concerned about the field of education than about other fields. In our survey we asked how their interest in education compared with their interest in seven other policy areas—was it more, about the same, or less? By policy area, 70 percent had more interest in education than in welfare; 68 percent more in education than in transportation or than in criminal justice; 67 percent more in education than in health; 59 percent more than in the environment and natural resources; 53 percent more than in energy; and 49 percent more than in economic development. Most of the other responses indicated their interest was about the same in each area, while only about 10 percent or so indicated

less of an interest in education than the policy domain against which it was being compared.

In view of this, it is understandable that most of the education leaders spend a substantial proportion of their legislative time on education. The percentages of legislators who devote different proportions of their time to education matters is shown in Table 10 (B). During both the legislative session and the interim roughly a quarter spend half or more of their time in the field. Another 36 percent spend about one-third or more of their time during the session and 24 percent about one-third or more during the interim. At the other end, one-tenth or less of the time is spent by 15 percent during the session and 31 percent during the interim. Legislators on education committees are apt to devote a larger proportion of their time in the session and the interim to the subject than are those who serve both on education and appropriations committees. And those who are on appropriations only or in top leadership positions are inclined to devote the smallest proportion to education.

We would imagine that members of the senate would be able to focus less on education, as compared to other matters, than members of the house. Senators, after all, ordinarily have more committee assignments to cover. This holds for education but not to a great degree. During the session 31 percent of the representatives and 24 percent of the senators spend half or more of their time on education; during the interim 26 percent of the former and 20 percent of the latter spend that amount.

The proportion of the education leadership's time that is spent on education, as opposed to other matters, would seem to offer a reasonable characterization of specialization within the legislature of a state. The larger the share of time spent solely on education, the greater the degree of specialization. Data reported in Table 12 give us some idea of the more- and the less-specialized states. Generally, but by no means universally, legislatures where education specialization is high during the session are also ones where specialization is high during the interim. Illinois, California, Florida, Connecticut, Wyoming, New York, and Utah are the more specialized states. And generally, but again not universally, legislatures where education specialization is low during the interim—Nevada, South Dakota, New Mexico, and Montana—are the less-specialized states. In other cases there is more of a balance in and out of session or the pattern is mixed.

Professional staffers naturally differ from legislators in how they allocate their time. Although they have to concern themselves with more than a single client, frequently they do not have to divide up their time among several policy areas. Of the 147 staffers under scrutiny, 46 percent spend all or nearly all their time on education. They, of course, are highly specialized. Another

Table 12: The Specialization of Legislative Education Leadership

Average Proportion of Time on Education During Interim	Average Proportion of Time on Education During Session: High (35–50%)	Medium (30–35%)	Low (16 to 30%)
High (30–50%)	Illinois California Florida Connecticut Wyoming New York Utah	Texas Oklahoma Nebraska	Colorado
Medium (20–30%)	North Carolina Oregon New Jersey	Iowa Pennsylvania Idaho South Carolina	Arkansas Arizona Indiana Tennessee New Hampshire Maryland
Low (8 to 20%)		Virginia Vermont	Nevada South Dakota New Mexico Montana

24 percent, who tend to work in the fiscal agencies and for money committees, spend half to three-quarters of their time on education, having to deal with other policy areas as well. Then there are 30 percent—including the fiscal staffers, agency directors, and aides to top leaders—who work on education a quarter or less of their time. Policy staffers are more likely to spend all their time on education (54 percent do) than are fiscal staffers (35 percent do).

Just as we explored state by state specialization of legislative leadership, so we can explore specialization in terms of staff. Table 13 reports the average proportion of staff time devoted to education policy in 28 states. In five states staff spends just about all of its time on education, and is thus highly specialized. Staff in five other states averages about three-quarters time on education and is slightly less specialized. In eleven other states staff is about half time and in seven one-quarter time or less, and these are the least specialized states.

Table 13: The Specialization of Education Staff Leaders

Average Proportion of Staff Time on Education Policy			
All	About three-quarters	About half	About a quarter or less
Arizona	Iowa	Colorado	Arkansas
California	Minnesota	Florida	Delaware
Connecticut	Texas	Georgia	Maryland
Michigan	Washington	Kansas	Missouri
Utah	West Virginia	Montana	North Dakota
		Nebraska	Oregon
		Nevada	Tennessee
		New Jersey	
		New Mexico	
		Ohio	
		Wisconsin	

The distribution of staff time is not identical to that of legislator time, but there seems to be some relationship. It may be that legislators who spend much of their time on education policy manage to obtain support from staff who do the same. Or it may be that full-time staff produces more information and discovers more problems and thus manages to obtain more time from legislators. It is also possible for staff to specialize in education, even without legislators paying much attention to the domain at all.

INTERESTS

In most places and for most legislators there is relatively little specialization *within* education; that is to say, few legislative education leaders develop sub-specialties. The reason for this is that there is too much ground to cover at any particular time and, in any case, the issues keep changing from time to time. Education issues are, or at least have been, much more transitory than education leadership. A legislator from a state in the Rocky Mountain region described how the terrain shifts from one session to the next:

> Take gifted education. We now have implemented it. It's operating, running. I'm sure we'll have to clean up stuff, embellish it. But that's not for a couple of years. So in the meantime you get into some other things like vocational education.

Or as a legislator from a state in New England characterized his attitude after a bill passed, "I've gone as far as I want to go with this." And he went on to something else. At one legislative session, competency based education may be on the agenda. When that is disposed of, the legislature and its leadership move on to something else—to special education, and then from elementary and secondary to higher education.

A number of members, nonetheless, do specialize. Some do so in higher education, especially if they are chairmen or members of a separate standing committee in the area or if the committee is organized into subcommittees. Such specialization coincides with their committee responsibility and comes naturally. Others do so in education finance, particularly if they are members of appropriations, ways and means, or finance committees. As was pointed out in Chapter 3, not more than a few legislators in any chamber develop a mastery of the funding formula—and these few tend to concentrate on the financing aspects of education policy.

While the legislators under study here are recognized to be "experts" on education generally, only a few of them are regarded as expert on specific matters (other than finance) within the field. These few tend to have worked occupationally or to have had salient experience in the field. A construction engineer who designed schools is now chairman of an education committee in a Western state. "I am pretty much 'the' expert on matters of construction, safety of buildings, earthquakes, and that kind of stuff," is how he describes his special competence. In a Rocky Mountain state, while there are "no real experts," according to one legislator, "there are people with pet projects." One who worked in the area of hearing disability would speak out when that subject arose; another who worked in vocational education made a special effort when it came up. Then, there is the legislator from a Midwestern state who had been chairman of the board of public instruction for several years. He tended to concentrate on areas that related to the department of public instruction; and in the words of a colleague, "since he was kind of an in-house expert, we utilized him for those types of issues."

There is some degree of overlap between those who focus on a particular subject because of their occupation and experience and those who do so because of what and whom they choose to represent. Legislator A may choose to represent vocational education interests, Legislator B the gifted and talented, and Legislator C the teachers. Practically everywhere there are a few members who carry special education, including those whose children or close relatives may themselves be handicapped. Legislators from districts with non-English speaking populations are the ones most familiar with bilingual programs and those who have universities or community colleges in their districts may concentrate on representing certain higher educational interests.

Frequently, a legislator's background, experience, and representational stance blend together, so that it is impossible to distinguish among them. A description of members of an education committee in an Eastern state is appropriate here. The committee included as vice chairman "a fellow who represents the town of _____, which includes [the state university], so he obviously has a major interest in higher education because most of his constituents are either students, faculty members, or employees." There was also the woman who taught for ten years, was a special education administrator for five, and who "knew more about elementary and secondary education than anybody on the committee, because she came from that kind of background." Finally, the committee included the school board member who "doesn't know a lot about operating the schools, but he knows what school boards do and how they set policy . . . ."

In short, among legislative education leaders a variety of experiences and interests are usually represented. "People tend to get known for their interest, their expertise, or their touch with certain interest groups," summed up a legislator from an Eastern state. "They tend to be viewed as specialists in the field." They are deemed specialists in education, but not specialists in specific subfields. They are regarded as legislators who, because of their backgrounds and/or their districts, may pursue particular educational interests. Thus, in New Hampshire, when the commissioner of education wants a member of the general assembly to sponsor departmental legislation, he seeks out people who come from the right party, the right part of the state, or the right kind of district, and not those who specialize within a narrow area.

Rather than "specialization," the concept "interests" most appropriately characterizes legislative leaders *within* the field of education. Interests vary from one leader to another, and vary from time to time. In our survey we asked the leaders to list up to three specific areas of educational policy which were of particular interest to them. Almost two-thirds of them listed education finance and another 12 percent wrote down postsecondary finance. Special education, vocational education, and competency based education were noted by only 16, 17, and 17 percent respectively. The overwhelming interest, if not specialization, is in education finance. In fact, in seven states—Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas—every leader expressed an interest in finance.

THE ISSUES[1]

During the course of a session, a state legislature—in its education or appropriations committees, on the senate or house floor, or simply through

the efforts of individual members—can work on a multiplicity of issues in a field such as education. Bills are introduced on just about everything. But what counts most is not what gets introduced, or even gets passed, but what issues receive the greatest attention and energy—what really is worked over by the influential legislators and the key staffers in education. As might be expected from our analysis of where education leadership is located and what education interests are held, finance is the issue that commands by far the greatest attention.

Table 14: Education Issues in the States

Type of Policy and Issue	Percentages Who Spent "A Lot" of Time Working on Issue	
	Legislators	Staffers
Finance		
Education finance	76	60
Postsecondary finance	44	32
Governance		
State elementary/secondary	29	24
Local elementary/secondary	13	14
Postsecondary	20	21
Categorical Programs		
Special education	32	22
Vocational education	20	10
Compensatory education	10	5
Bilingual education	6	8
Desegregation	3	1
Federal programs and aid	10	5
Personnel		
Labor-management (Collective Bargaining)	10	8
Pensions, retirement	19	7
Teacher certification and training	13	8
Other		
Competency based, basic skills, testing	20	16
Declining enrollment	18	14
Community colleges	29	25
Adult education	8	3

Table 14 shows the percentage of both legislators and staffers who in 1979 spent "a lot" of their time on each of eighteen different educational issues. The priorities of legislators and staffers, as is indicated here, are not very different. Each group allocated its effort in roughly the same way. What is obvious is the dominance of school finance at the elementary and secondary level.

Few other issues come close to the fiscal ones. Community colleges, and particularly their costs, are a recently recognized problem; and about one-quarter of legislators and staffers put in time here. Governance is a perennial issue, both for elementary and secondary schools and increasingly for higher education. But categorical programs—many of which relate to federal as well

Table 15: Major Issues in the States*

State	Education Finance	Post-secondary Finance	Special Education	Community Colleges	State Governance	Competency Based Education	Pensions, Retirement	Vocational Education
Arizona	X							
Arkansas	X							
California	X	X	X	X				
Colorado	X	X						
Connecticut	X	X			X			
Florida	X	X		X		X		
Idaho	X							
Illinois	X		X					
Indiana	X	X						
Iowa	X							
Maryland								
Montana	X							
Nebraska	X	X	X	X	X			
Nevada	X			X				
New Hampshire	X		X					
New Jersey	X					X		
New Mexico								
New York	X	X		X	X			
North Carolina	X		X	X				
Oklahoma	X		X				X	X
Oregon	X	X		X				
Pennsylvania	X							
South Carolina	X					X		
South Dakota	X	X			X			
Tennessee	X							
Texas	X	X						
Utah	X							
Vermont								
Virginia	X	X					X	
Wyoming	X			X				

* A major issue is one which receives "a lot" of work by *all or nearly all* the legislative education leaders in the state.

as state policy—command relatively little attention. Compensatory education, bilingual, and desegregation overall are almost ignored. The exception is special education. In large part because of federal law—P.L. 94-142—which mandates processes and programs for the education of the handicapped, one-third of the legislators and one-fifth of the staffers put in substantial time here. Personnel items, such as labor-management relations (including collective bargaining), pensions, teacher certification, and the like, receive effort from some of the legislators, but not many members of the staff.[2] Competency based education and basic skills, which has been referred to as "the hottest issue in education since Sputnik," seems to have subsided, perhaps because by 1979 most states had adopted legislation in response to the minimal competency movement. Now, only one out of five members devotes much time to this.

Legislators' responses also provide us with an idea of what issues receive attention in each of the states. If we take into account matters receiving the most attention, we can see just where legislators focus on just what. As the data in Table 15 show, education finance is not only the major issue overall, but it also is the major issue for legislative education leaders in twenty-seven of the thirty states and is the only major issue in eight of them. Postsecondary finance gets comparable billing in eleven states, community colleges in eight, special education in six, state governance in four, competency based education in three, pensions and retirement in two, and vocational education in one.

CHAPTER 4 NOTES

1. This section is based on Alan Rosenthal and Susan Fuhrman, "Education Policy: Money is the Name of the Game," *State Legislatures* (September, 1980), pp. 4–10.
2. Sometimes, as in Wisconsin, collective bargaining and related issues come within the jurisdiction of a labor committee, are not conceived of as primarily educational in nature, and are not the concern of those designated as education leaders in the present study.

Chapter 5 To Whom They Are Linked

The job of being a legislator is an extremely busy one, as far as dealing with people is concerned. A legislator has hundreds of ongoing relationships. There are those with his colleagues in the legislature, with all the individuals and groups working at the state capital, with supporters and constituents in the district, and with people well beyond the borders of his own state. Few of us, as a matter of fact, deal with as many different individuals and on as many different issues as do state legislators. Even within their fields of specialization—as education is for the legislators we identified and surveyed—they deal with a large number of individuals and groups at various levels.

Most important are the relationships a legislator has with his colleagues. The legislative education leaders interact primarily with colleagues on the committees on which they serve, the houses in which they are members, and the party caucuses with which they have an affiliation. These are their principal relationships when it comes to legislation and to specific matters of education policy. Also important are the relationships a legislator has with staff who work directly, or even less directly, for him. Education staff is a primary source of support for legislative education leaders. In terms of information, for example, three out of four of the legislators surveyed here thought that legislative staff reports were "very useful." No other source came close in the opinions of the education leaders.

LEGISLATOR AND STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

Of special concern in our study are the relationships legislative education leaders and education staff have with other actors in the state and local environments. "Relationships" can encompass a variety of dealings between those who share in them. Our attention is directed toward two aspects of legislator and staff relationships—where they get their information and with whom they have contact on matters of education.

Ordinarily, in exploring legislator and staff relationships with executive agencies or with interest groups, political scientists have failed to distinguish among types of relationships. There is a difference between a relationship devoted mainly to *information* and one that ranges more broadly and is maintained by *contact*. Elected public officials, in particular, turn in certain directions when they require research and data and in other directions when they need more political information. Similarly, they depend upon some organizations for documentary, written, statistical, and computerized communications and on others for face-to-face messages. This latter category includes interactions ranging from casual conversation to intensive lobbying to formal meetings and conferences. It is necessary to draw a distinction between these types of relationships. In doing this, we first asked legislators "in your legislative work on education, how useful is the research information contained in the reports and publications" of a number of specified agencies and associations. We then asked them, "in your legislative work on education, how important is your contact" with a number of specified people.[1] Our survey evidenced marked differences between informational relationships and contacts and also between the relationships of legislators and staff.

Table 16 presents the percentages of education leaders who consider specified sources of information to be very useful and specified contacts to be very important. Half the legislators regard the state department of education (which in some states may apply to the department of higher education as well) to be a primary source of information. That is a large proportion. Only one-third of them feel similarly about the teachers association, one-quarter about the school boards association, and one-fifth about the state board of education. The main sources of information are concentrated; contacts, however, are far more dispersed.

Legislators deal with many people on a face-to-face basis at both the state and local levels, although their principal relationships with them may not be informational. Again, the department of education (or higher education) is the key agency here. Three out of five legislators find their contact with the department very important. Half feel that way about contact with the teachers association and about one-third with the school boards association. Relatively few think contact with the state board is very important, in large part because few such boards have much in the way of power. Many education leaders, in fact, rarely hear from the state board; and as one member from a Midwestern state put it, "We simply view the state department as running the board." The governor and his staff are also viewed as major sources of contact for three out of ten legislators. But for most legislators the chief executive is pretty far removed, and does not participate extensively in the education

Table 16: Relationships of Legislative Education Leaders

Individuals and Groups	Percentages of Leaders for Whom Information Very Useful	Contact Very Important
State level		
Board of education	22	13
Department of education	50	61
Teachers association	32	50
School boards association	26	31
Governor and his staff	—*	30
Staff of executive budget agency	—	51
Local level		
Administrators and faculty of postsecondary institutions	—	39
School superintendents	—	39
Teacher representatives and teachers	—	37
School board members	—	28
Parent representatives and parents	—	31
Other constituents	—	20
Press	—	8

* —indicates item was not listed for question.

policy domain. Not so the staff of the executive budget agency—whether located in the department of finance or administration or in the governor's own office. Half the legislators, and mainly those who are on fiscal committees, consider their contacts with people in this agency to be very important.

Contacts obviously extend to the local level. There are the administrators and faculty members of college campuses in the districts represented by the legislative education leaders. Two out of five legislators, and even more of those who serve on postsecondary education committees, regard such contact as very important. Many state boards of higher education or regents have a policy limiting communications from within the university system to the legislature. Nevertheless, the chancellors or heads of individual campus units appeal directly to their legislators, particularly if they are in positions of leadership. There are also the local school superintendents, teacher representatives and teachers, school board members, and parent representatives and

Table 17: Relationships of Legislative Education Staff

Individuals and Groups	Percentages of Staff for Whom Information Used a Lot	Contact Very Important
State level		
Department of education	58	76
Teachers association	5	25
School boards association	4	24
Administrators association	2	14
Staff of governor's office	—*	21
Staff of executive budget agency	—	42
Local level		
Faculty of universities	—	12
School superintendents	—	16
Teacher representatives and teachers	—	5
Parent representatives and parents	—	5

* —indicates item was not listed for question

parents—all of them are deemed important by substantial proportions of legislators. Some members shy away from involvement with local education officials, not wanting to have to carry legislation for the district. Most, however, maintain and strengthen such relationships in the field of education, realizing the relevance of contact to political candidacies and careers.

The relationships of staff contrast sharply with those of legislators, as is shown in Table 17. They are more concentrated. Virtually the only producer of information—reports, publications, and statistics—which is used a lot by staff is the state department of education. Three-fifths of the staffers rely on the department's data, while extremely few rely on information from any other state-level source. It is not possible for legislatures to create independent data bases; except perhaps in states like California, the resources to do that just do not exist. State departments of education are constantly collecting data from local districts, so they naturally are a key source of information. "You must work with the agency," according to one staff member, "you must get to understand their data base." Staff may not buy a department's basic point of view, but they start out with its basic data. They can check these data with other information, apply alternative assumptions to their interpretation, manipulate them in various ways, and come out with different

conclusions. But few staffs can avoid a large degree of dependency upon the department for information.

Not only as a provider of information but also as a source of contacts, the state department of education is salient for staff. Three out of four staffers regard departmental contact as very important. The closest competition is the staff of the executive budget agency, which is considered to be important by two out of five, and mainly by those who serve fiscal committees. Not many deal much with people in the governor's office. Only one-quarter or so regard the state teachers association or the school boards association as critical to their work; and even fewer have much contact with individuals at the local level. For staff, contacts are strictly limited, almost as much as are sources of information.

DEALING WITH TEACHERS

A few years ago a major study of education policy making pointed out that, according to legislators in twelve states, teacher associations were the most influential groups. This was mainly because they had substantial resources to commit to their legislative objectives and a large number of members to call upon for political action. Information and expertise were not among the most frequently mentioned reasons for the influence of teachers. The conclusion of this study was that teacher associations were "very powerful indeed."[1]

In recent years the power of the teachers has diminished somewhat. A legislator from an Eastern state, for instance, remarked that recently the public and its elected representatives were reacting negatively to organized teachers. "They are looked upon solely as self-interested people," he said "who want more for themselves out of the education pie." Still, teacher associations are more influential than any other groups in the educational arena and often as influential as any of the interest groups in the state. The Massachusetts teachers association, to cite one example, is characterized as "without question the most effective education lobbyist in the state." In Pennsylvania, to cite another example, "they don't win them all, but they are very influential."

Our survey of legislator and staff education leaders suggests that the influence of teachers is based more on their political clout than on the information they supply. Only one out of three of these legislators finds that the information from teachers is very useful. Even fewer staffers make much use of information from them. In some states, the teachers may generate computer printouts on salaries which finds their way into the legislature. But most educational data come from the department of education, and not from the

teachers. As a Midwestern legislator explained the informational role of the teachers in the state: "We don't get a lot of data from them, but we certainly get reactions from them that are very important." Of the 30 states under examination here, in relatively few, eight, is information from teacher associations regarded as most useful to legislator education leaders, as is shown in Table 18. In sixteen other states it is regarded generally as being somewhat useful and in the remaining six it is thought by most of the legislative leaders not to be useful at all. Information, then, is not teachers' principal stock in trade. Contact, however, is. This is predictable, especially since teacher organizations have been characterized in the study cited above as emphasizing "political pressure for political decisions."[3]

Wherever they are intensely engaged in electoral and lobbying activity, contact with them will obviously be perceived as very important by legislators. And many teacher groups provide significant electoral assistance to legislator education leaders. The teachers association in California, for instance, is the third largest contributor in the state to legislative races. And one Wisconsin legislator, by way of illustration, had 200 volunteers who were teachers or members of their families working in his last campaign. Teacher association contact would surely be salient for him after reelection. In a number of places local association members customarily contact legislators from their districts and "lock them into a position before they've had time to review the evidence." During the course of their campaigns, candidates in New Jersey and elsewhere make commitments to teachers in return for their endorsements, contributions, and active support. All of this, of course, means that contact with statewide teachers associations is only to be expected. Finally, there are those legislators, who because of their backgrounds or current occupations, represent teachers' interests and carry their legislation. They are virtually affiliated with the teachers association, so that sustained contact is quite natural.

In any event, contact is perceived as most important by legislative education leaders in sixteen—somewhat over half—of the states under study. In another eleven it is somewhat important and in only three is it viewed as less important. When information is more useful, contact is also most important and in every case where information is at least somewhat useful, contact is at least somewhat important. Indeed, there are only a few states—Wyoming, New Mexico, and New Hampshire—where teachers apparently have so little clout that legislators do not have to deal with them very much at all.

RELIANCE ON THE STATE DEPARTMENT

The primary source of information and the major contact for legislators and staff alike is the state department of education, which is meant here to

Table 18: Linkage of Legislative Education Leadership Structures with Teacher Associations

Usefulness of Information*	Importance of Contact*	
	Most Important	Somewhat Important	Less Important
Usefulness of Information*	Importance of Contact*	
	Most Important	Somewhat Important	Less Important
Most useful	Utah		
	Indiana		
	Tennessee		
	Pennsylvania		
	New Jersey		
	Nevada		
	Illinois		
	New York		
Somewhat useful	Idaho	Arkansas	
	Texas	Virginia	
	Iowa	Colorado	
	Oregon	North Carolina	
	Nebraska	South Carolina	
	Oklahoma	South Dakota	
	Florida	Arizona	
	Connecticut	Montana	
Less useful		Maryland	Wyoming
		California	New Mexico
		Vermont	New Hampshire

* Based on an index in which legislator education leader responses of "very useful" and "very important" are scored two points, those of "somewhat useful" and "somewhat important" are scored one point, and "not useful" and "not important" are scored no points. In terms of information and contact respectively, states where responses average 1.5 to 2.0 points are categorized as "most useful" and "most important," 1.0 to 1.4 as "somewhat useful" and "somewhat important," and under 1.0 as "less useful" and "less important."

include the chief state school officer who heads it.

The standing of the department, in fact, often depends on what the legislature thinks of the secretary or commissioner of education or the superintendent of public instruction, as the chief may be called. One legislator from an Eastern state described the feeling among his colleagues that there was too much bureaucracy at both the state and regional levels; but the primary factor was that "the commissioner had lost a great deal of credibility with many legislators." Relationships change as chief state school officers come

and go. In a Midwestern state, the department formerly had exercised a degree of leadership. Then, with the election of a weak superintendent, the relationship changed dramatically. With the head almost held in contempt by the legislature, the department ceased providing any direction for the state. Illustrative also is the change that occurred in departmental leadership in another Midwestern state. Former superintendents, according to one legislator, "liked to hold their cards real close and didn't like to share information with the general assembly." The legislature was not happy about that. But in recent years, he continued, "since we've gotten a new superintendent, the department has worked much better with the legislature."

Even when legislator perceptions of top department personnel are generally positive, legislator views of the educational bureaucracy usually are skeptical at best and highly critical at worst. One of their biggest complaints is that the bureaucracy is too large. On occasion, as in the case of Missouri, the department is described as "professional" and well-run." More frequently it is described in negative terms:

- We look at them with a jaundiced eye, and they look at us with a jaundiced eye too.
- The department is overstaffed, dull, mediocre, and it doesn't provide any leadership.
- The department is staffed by incompetents—people who couldn't make it in the field and retired to the state department of education to finish out their careers.
- You get a lot of jargon and a lot of fuzzy thinking. I don't find that people go to the department for assistance very often.

Those comments are from members in Southern and New England states, but they are fairly typical of the legislatures that "regard the department with varying degrees of dislike." Even when supportive of educational interests, as in Pennsylvania, "the legislature is very willing to stick it to the department."

Although legislators typically express suspicion of the state department of education, they rely heavily on it for information and other assistance. Just how much of a role information from the department plays in the legislature of each of 30 states is suggested in Table 19. In thirteen of the states department information is considered to be most useful and in another thirteen it is regarded as somewhat useful. Only in four—South Carolina, Montana, Nebraska, and California—is information from the state department of education used only minimally.

It is apparent that, with the few exceptions already noted, legislators and their staffs do rely on the department for data, including statistical and other

Table 19: Linkage of Legislative Education Leadership Structures with Departments of Education

Usefulness of Information*	Importance of Contact*			
	Most important		Somewhat Important	Less Important
Most useful	Connecticut	Idaho		
	New York	Texas		
	North Carolina	Virginia		
	Pennsylvania	Wyoming		
	Colorado	Iowa		
	South Dakota	Florida		
	New Jersey			
Somewhat useful	Utah		Arkansas	
	Maryland		Tennessee	
	Nevada		New Mexico	
	Oklahoma		Indiana	
	Illinois		New Hampshire	
	Arizona		Oregon	
			Vermont	
Less useful			South Carolina	
			Montana	
			Nebraska	
			California	

* Based on an index in which legislator education leader responses of "very useful" and "very important" are scored two points, those of "somewhat useful" and "somewhat important" are scored one point, and "not useful" and "not important" are scored no points. In terms of information and contact respectively, states where responses average 1.5 to 2.0 points are categorized as "most useful" and "most important," 1.0 to 1.4 as "somewhat useful" and "somewhat important," and under 1.0 as "less useful" and "less important."

types of information. Perhaps an extreme instance of such reliance is described by a top official of the department of education in an Eastern state. In his view, the legislature counts heavily on the department for computerized information on school enrollments and the distribution of funds. "We are the only ones with all the information," he points out. Others have bits and pieces, but when it comes to a major issue, such as the fight over school finance, "it was our agency they were calling every five or ten minutes, saying, 'Can you change this, do a printout, and have it ready in an hour?'" Another legislator, from a state where the legislature is fairly critical of departmental leadership, mentioned that as far as information and figures

were concerned, "there is a pretty good relationship." The legislature got what it wanted and could rely pretty much on what it got.

However, legislative reliance on the department for information is not the same as legislative dependence; and our study results may overstate the legislative-departmental affinity. Even though they obtain most of their data from the department, which after all collects and stores it, legislatures today have the capacity to do their own analysis and reach their own conclusions. Or else they are in the process of developing such capacity. In one Midwestern state the legislature formerly depended on the department completely. It had the experts and the numbers. The legislature now has its own staff, and in the words of the chairman of the house education committee, "We understand how to work those doggoned computers." Relationships between the legislature and the department have since improved, because:

> We kind of edged them out of the game in a way. We can keep up with them, match wits with them. It isn't that we trust them so much more. It's just that we don't have to depend on them so much.

Trust is no longer as necessary as it used to be. Legislatures can check on the data supplied to them and can substitute their own interpretations and conclusions for those of the department of education. In a state in the Rocky Mountain region, for instance, although legislators still get their raw data from the department, the legislative staff "looks over their shoulders, reviews their figures, and keeps them honest."

In most places the legislature, through its staff, now can tell the department just what statistical information it wants and in approximately what form. Florida's legislature recently lived through a love affair with management information systems. It kept demanding more and more data from the department, developed its own analytical expertise, and did not allow anyone's control of information to interfere with its access to the larger education community. This new type of relationship operates most effectively when school finance is under discussion. An Oregon legislator praised the department for its technical expertise and responsiveness to legislative demands, claiming that "we have been able to get, within a day or so, complete computer printouts which show the effect of just about any proposal on every school district in Oregon."[4] The situation is similar in Wisconsin where the department of public instruction now is occupied doing computer runs for the legislature (and for the governor), whereas formerly it ran the computer for itself only.

A few legislatures go even further than requesting specific information in a designated form and using it for their own, rather than for departmental, purposes. In some places the legislature, usually through the staff of a fiscal

agency or special committee, has the capacity to tap directly into the department's data bank. This is true in Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin to varying extents. Probably more has been accomplished along these lines in California than anywhere else. Here a school finance simulation was developed collaboratively by the departments of education and finance and by the legislature. An arrangement was worked out to agree upon and share a common data base, which would be able to provide outputs considered credible by the various parties.[5]

Legislative contact with the state department of education is just as salient as is legislative use of departmental information. In fact, it may be somewhat more salient, as is suggested in Table 19. In nineteen of the 30 states, contact is regarded by legislators as most important and in the remaining eleven it is regarded as at least somewhat important. Nowhere is it felt to be less important.

Contact between the department and the education leaders in the legislature is almost unavoidable. The flow of information encourages it. The processing of legislation and the budget require it. Not only are there matters of major legislation—revising a school finance formula, modifying a billingual education program, or consolidating districts—that arise occasionally, but there are also the minor matters that constantly crop up. Contact is necessary because of so-called "housekeeping" legislation—the many bills sponsored by the department involving technical questions dealing with federal mandates, regulatory practices, state aid payments, reporting requirements, and the like.

Because contact is both necessary and important does not mean that the legislature is dominated by or heavily under the influence of the educational professionals. In a few instances that may be so. New Hampshire's state department lines up sponsors for legislation, testifies on it before the committees, and shepherds it across the floor. Many of the bills that members sponsor are ones the department wants. In the majority of cases, however, legislators regard the department warily. This is the predominant orientation, despite the fact that in several places (Pennsylvania and New Jersey are among them) the person handling liaison with the legislature for the department formerly worked on the staff of the legislature itself. Legislators are suspicious of a large bureaucracy and fearful of being taken in. The effective legislative education leader, however, will not be taken advantage of, at least not often. Even in a New England state where the department is in command, the chairman of the education committee insists on an independent role. He relates:

> Last year I happened to be over on the senate side to watch a couple of bills.

> The commissioner of education offered an amendment to one of my bills. It angered the hell out of me. He apologized and said it wouldn't happen again. They don't get caught at it twice.

Few state departments of education can put much over on the legislature anymore. Even where they are strong, departments must pursue relationships with the legislature as if between equals.

ORGANIZATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Legislators and their staffs (if staffing existed in a particular state at the time) used to keep within their own boundaries, having little interaction with counterparts from elsewhere and little to do with national organizations. They stayed at home and went about their business. In the past decade, however, opportunities for legislators and staff from across the nation to meet with one another and discuss common issues have been expanding. Today a variety of agencies and organizations seek to attract their attention and their participation.

Efforts have been made to reach out to legislators and staff by those organizations in which their states have membership. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) includes all of the 50 states, and is the principal general-purpose membership organization of legislators and their staffs. The Council of State Governments (CSG), which includes regional groupings in the East, South, Midwest, and West, is another general-purpose organization including not only legislators but other state officials too. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a national compact, which includes 48 of the states and focuses on education policy. At the present time, ECS, jointly with NCSL, is running a program of seminars, titled Advanced Leadership Program Services (ALPS) and involving about 100 legislators who are influential in education.

Federal agencies—specifically the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and its National Institute of Education (NIE)—have attempted to communicate research findings to state legislatures, and in particular to their education staffs. The Institute for Educational Leadership, which is based in the nation's capital, also has been making an effort with legislators and staff in the field of education. Through its "The Associates Program" (TAP) in 33 states, the Institute conducts a series of seminars and builds networks of education leadership, which include legislators, legislative staff, state board members, commissioners, and so forth.

Finally there are the professional associations—such as the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Education Finance Association (AEFA), and the American Society for Public Administration

Table 20: Involvement in National Organizations

A. Information

Sources of Information	Percentages Who Find Information Very Useful	
	Legislators	Staffers
U.S. Office of Education**	3	2
National Institute of Education**	5	2
Education Commission of the States	31	12
National Conference of State Legislatures	—*	11

B. Participation

Organizations in Which Involved	Percentages Who Participated Somewhat or a Lot	
	Legislators	Staffers
National Conference of State Legislatures	65	37
Education Commission of the States	50	25
The Associates Program of Institute for Educational Leadership	23	13
Council of State Governments	48	27
American Educational Research Association	—	5
American Education Finance Association	—	9
American Society for Public Administration	—	9

* —indicates item was not listed for question.

** Now incorporated in the U.S. Department of Education.

(ASPA)—which try to recruit legislative staffers (but usually not legislators themselves) to their ranks.

In our study of state legislative education leaders, we wanted to see just how involved legislators and staff were in organizations that extended beyond their own states. How useful did they find information from several national sources and how much did they participate in a number of national organizations? The results of this inquiry are reported in Table 20.

As far as information is concerned, very few legislators or staff find the work of the former Office of Education or NIE to be very useful (and over half believe it to be not useful at all). The Education Department is too new to have a track record of its own. Not many staffers, moreover, regard the work of ECS or NCSL to be very useful in their legislative work on education. But legislators tend to be far more positive with respect to the information provided by ECS; nearly one-third of them believe the Commission's work in the field of education is very useful to them.

As far as participation is concerned, there is at least some involvement in a few of the organizations by large proportions of the legislators and more moderate proportions of the staff. As might be expected, NCSL leads in terms of both legislators and staff, with almost two-thirds of the former and over one-third of the latter participating either somewhat or a lot. This is not to say that involvement by these education leaders in NCSL relates specifically to education; it undoubtedly covers a broader area. As the general-purpose association, CSG gets somewhat lesser participation—from half the legislators and one-quarter of the staff. ECS, which is concerned exclusively with education, attracts the same proportions as does CSG. This is not surprising, since one out of five of the 285 legislator education leaders are also commissioners for their states in ECS (and a number have attended one of the ALPS conferences). The Associates Program involves one- quarter of the legislators and about half as many staff. The professional associations, whether educational or administrative in nature, appeal to only a few staffers at all.

It is interesting that with regard to organizational involvement outside the state, just as with regard to information and contact within the state, legislators and staffs differ significantly. Although it might be anticipated that professionals would be more cosmopolitan and politicians more parochial in their relationships, the orientations would appear to be reversed. The conventional view is that staff is the channel to the outside world for most legislators. This is by no means so. Legislators participate substantially more than do staff. No doubt, this is largely because legislators have greater opportunity to travel at state cost to national conferences and meetings. Opportunities for staff, except for agency directors and perhaps their deputies, are limited. But beyond this, legislators are conditioned to life with multiple sources of information, widely varied contacts, and numerous organizational involvements. Staff, by contrast, is more comfortable in a rather circumscribed setting, doing research and analysis, and narrowing in rather than reaching out. In education, as in other domains, the linkages of legislators and staff are not the same.

CHAPTER 5 NOTES

1. The wording of these items on the staff questionnaire, which was developed before the legislator questionnaire, differed slightly, as did the listings of organizations and individuals.
2. JAlan Aufderheide, "Educational Interest Groups and the State Legislature," in Roald F. Campbell and Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr. (eds.), *State Policy*

Making for the Public Schools (Berkeley, California: McCutchan, 1976), pp. 205–210.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
4. Quoted in Douglas Mitchell, *Social Science Impact on Legislative Decision Making* (Grant No. NIE -G-76-0104, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979), p. 238.
5. For a fascinating account of the political and technological issues in the management of data, see Peter G. W. Keen, "The California School Finance Simulation: A Case Study of Effective Implementation," Research Paper No. 467 (Stanford: Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, January 1978).

Chapter 6 What They Do

The functions that legislative education leadership performs are not unlike those performed by leadership in other policy domains or those performed by the legislature as an institution. Legislatures, as political institutions, engage in a number of functions, but four are most relevant for our purposes.

First is the development and processing of legislation, which is the business upon which legislatures and legislators spend a good deal of their time and energy. They introduce bills, deliberate on them in committee, possibly consider them in caucus, and move them on the floor. And they do much of this in both the senate and the house. Policies and programs are initiated and modified (but rarely abolished) through what is known as the lawmaking process.

Second is review of the executive budget, whether on an annual basis as in most states or a biennial basis as in some, and the appropriation of funds by means other than the regular budget process. Legislative participation in the allocation of fiscal resources has become critical of late.

Third is oversight of ongoing state programs and the operations of executive agencies. Included here are several kinds of oversight activities, but especially performance auditing, program review, and evaluation.

Fourth is constituent service, which usually involves legislative intervention with administrative agencies on behalf of individuals and groups back home who are encountering problems.

THE PERFORMANCE OF LEGISLATORS

The percentages of legislators who spend a lot of their time on each of the functions during the session and the interim are reported in Table 21. Also shown in the table is the time spent specifically by legislators who are members of both education and appropriations committees, of the education committee, of the appropriations committee, or who are in top leadership positions.

Table 21: Functional Performance of Legislative Education Leaders

Period and Position	Percentages Spending A Lot of Time			
	Policy Making	Budget Review	Oversight	Constituent Service
Session				
Education and Appropriations (N=83)	57	89	26	31
Education (N=84)	76	40	24	39
Appropriations (N=38)	26	90	33	36
Top Leadership (N=43)	47	80	19	35
Total (N=285)	56	67	25	33
Interim				
Education and Appropriations (N=83)	36	39	27	41
Education (N=84)	31	12	24	45
Appropriations (N=38)	9	58	34	36
Top Leadership (N=43)	22	43	27	28
Total (N=285)	28	32	26	38

Policy making, as would be expected, is a function on which much of the time of many of the legislator education leaders is devoted while the legislative session is in progress. The development and processing of legislation covers a broad terrain. Nearly everywhere it encompasses what we have referred to as housekeeping bills, which are requested by the department of education or by a local school district. It also encompasses major legislation, mainly that which establishes new policies or programs or reorients older ones in significant ways. During the decade of the Seventies many legislatures took on policy-making tasks in the fields of education that they had not taken on before. They have been quite active as far as policy making is concerned.

This is in part a consequence of pressures from outside. The courts, for example, called into question funding systems in a number of states; and in response legislatures were forced to revise their prior policies.[1] Then, of course, there are the needs and demands of various "power blocs," as described by a legislator from a Western state:

> It might be that a teachers group, in complaining about the dismissal processes being used by school boards, goes to some legislator who will come up with a bill on that subject. It might be that an agency of government, such as the state department of education, would ask me if I would carry some bills to extend the life of a particular project.

Legislators themselves initiate policy, often without much prodding from anyone else.[2] They want to use the law to remedy problems of which they are aware. The Western state legislator quoted above comments on the role played by individual colleagues:

> ———, a former high school teacher, was very interested in diplomas and that they should be meaningful. So our minimum standards laws came out of his personal interests . . . .

Florida's legislature illustrates the strong role in policy making that has been played by legislatures in recent years. The major landmarks in educational policy leadership in Florida were as follows. In 1972 the legislature developed a general revision of the school code, giving the local level greater control. The next year it developed a school finance program, in which it devised an equalization plan within and among districts, established a management scheme, and decided to give greater weightings to elementary rather than secondary education. The following year collective bargaining and administrative procedures were addressed. Then, in 1975, early childhood and basic skills were the thrust. One year later the accountability act of 1976 was passed. The next year a compensatory education act was developed to follow through on the accountability statute and to provide special help for children who were deficient in basic skills. Other legislatures have operated in similar fashion—taking on one major policy or program each year. South Carolina, for instance, passed an educational finance act in 1977, a basic skills assessment act in 1978, a teacher evaluation and certification bill in 1979, and then it turned its efforts to the revamping of the higher educational system.

By the end of the decade, however, the policy-making machinery seemed to be slowing down in most places. Administrative agencies became overwhelmed with problems of implementation—formulating guidelines, getting programs underway, and setting up monitoring systems in order to report on progress to the legislature. To many administrators an overload of legislation had developed. State departments of education tried, therefore, to deflect legislative initiatives. A top official in a New England state details how his department did so:

> They wanted to pass the legislation a couple of years ago on creating these basic skills programs that a lot of the other states did. We told them we didn't think it was a good idea to go the legislative route and that we were moving on our own, if they would give us some time. And maybe we could put together something that would make more sense and be more flexible than writing it into statute . . . . After about eighteen months we ended up with a policy on basic skills improvement, which will go into effect in September.

> It was supported by every single education constituency in this state, including the teachers association. Now, we'll go back to the legislators and say, 'this is what we are going to put in place, and here's who is in favor of it.' The superintendents support it, the school committees support it, teachers support it, and the principals support it.

Legislator education leaders are also becoming more concerned with the expanded legislative role in policy making. One such individual, a party leader in another New England state, expressed his view of the situation:

> The old expression, 'the business of legislators is to legislate,' frightens me some, because what the system needs most is a period of tranquility to recover from all the legislating. And every two years when the legislature comes in, there is more turbulence and more redirection—more of exactly what it is that the educational system doesn't need.

In his own state things are changing—retrenchment appears to be setting in. At the last session there were only twelve serious bills to mandate new programs. But there were also nine other bills to eliminate already mandated programs. None of the twelve or of the nine passed, however. Even the Florida legislature was winding down, turning from elementary and secondary education to some restructuring of higher education. Florida's immediate future would seem to be one of consolidation, with legislative "tinkering" at the margins, rather than innovation at the core of education policy.

Despite the latest reactions, legislator education lenders still devote a large amount of time to the policy-making function. As is shown in Table 21, of the total group 56 percent spend a lot of time on developing and processing legislation during the session, while only half that many—28 percent—do likewise during the interim. Policy making, as can be seen by the data, is mainly the business of legislators who are members of education committees. During the session 76 percent and during the interim 31 percent of them put in a lot of time on education legislation. Of those on both education and appropriations committees, fewer during the session and slightly more during the interim spend this kind of time at policy making in education. By contrast, relatively few of those who are only on appropriations committees devote a lot of time to policy making as compared to other legislative functions in the education field.

In terms of the allocation of time by legislator education leaders, the single most important function they perform is reviewing the budget and making appropriations. We have already noted the importance of fiscal issues, particularly in Chapter 4, so it is understandable that this function receives a large part of legislator effort.

Some of the attention here involves formulas for elementary and secondary schools. In many states now the formula provisions are strictly legislative initiatives, "literally dreamed up by legislators," according to a member from the Midwest. Some of it has to do with the budget process per se, particularly with regard to postsecondary institutions which in a number of places are now being squeezed. Because of pressures for fiscal containment and because of enrollment declines, legislatures have begun to cut budgets—whether lump sum or line item—for higher education.

In a few instances legislative attention goes beyond the actual appropriation of funds, even to the way they are being expended. Ohio is a case where the legislature's state controlling board has the authority to release all appropriated funds before they can be spent. Once a month the board will release the school finance formula payments for local districts, including federal monies. In doing this, the board, on behalf of the legislature, exercises further appropriations authority. In essence, its posture is: "Although we have no power to amend this, we are telling you that unless you amend it in such and such a way, we are not approving it." Such a posture, as anyone might imagine, usually gets results.

Most recently legislatures have been making efforts to control federal funds, which overall constitute from 20 to 30 percent of most state budgets. They have not made very much headway, but they are becoming insistent that they have some say in the appropriation of monies from Washington.[3] Take Missouri, for example. The legislature here exerts a fairly high degree of control through a "federal grant program fund," and has turned down federal funds for law enforcement and social welfare programs. According to one Missouri legislator: "We ask, 'what will it cost the state and is it worth it?' As soon as we know it's not worth it, we are not going to start it." That is Missouri's philosophy, and it has begun to have effect generally, but only a minute effect in the domain of education.

The California legislature moved in 1980 to reappropriate federal education funds; but in most places, whatever the talk, legislatures exert little control over federal funds for schools. Federal education programs, in the words of a legislator from the Rocky Mountain region, are "pretty much left alone." Or, as an Eastern state legislator put it, "We just take the money for whatever the federal purposes." Legislatures, as a matter of fact, are not very familiar at all with the types and amounts of money coming into the state for educational purposes. "The members on the education committee," a close observer in a New England state commented, "could not tell you within millions of dollars how much Title I money we get in this state."

The lack of legislative involvement is attributable to several factors. First, federal money is a relatively small share of the total going into education

(unlike the proportion of transportation money that comes from the federal government), and thus is of less concern to legislators. Second, most federal money goes to local districts with little or no state discretion. Legislators do not feel they can intervene very much in such arrangements. Third, with the exception of places like Wyoming, legislatures are careful not to jeopardize the flow of federal funds into their states; they are reluctant to throw a monkey wrench into the process. Although there is always discussion about reappropriating monies, not that much actually takes place; and what does take place has made little difference—at least up until now. "It's hard enough to get it [federal money] in the first place; then to have it reappropriated just slows down the process and it becomes almost useless." That is how a Southern legislator characterized his own position and that of other friends of education in his state.

Whether federal funds are much involved or not, the budget and appropriations process during the session is where 67 percent of the legislator education leaders expend much of their energy. That includes nearly all of those on the appropriations committee, as well as four out of five of those in top leadership. About twice as many of these legislators spend a lot of time on budget review as spend it on policy making. Only in the case of education committees are members likely to spend less sessional time on budget review than on policy making. The interim is different. Budget and appropriations play a lesser role. Only one-third of all these legislators—but two-fifths of those on both education and appropriations and three-fifths of those only on appropriations—put in a lot of time on this function when the legislature is not in session.

Until the 1970s legislative oversight had been ignored in most states. Recently, however, legislatures acknowledged their responsibility for the function, began to develop the capacity to engage in oversight, started to work at the job, and even had some noteworthy effects. There is no single type of legislative oversight, but rather several varieties, all of which relate to a review of the activities of executive agencies and of the policies and programs they administer. One type is relatively inadvertent. It accompanies other legislative business, such as handling constituent complaints, and is pursued with other aims in mind. Another type focuses on administrative rules and regulations, another on executive agencies, and still another on ongoing policies or programs. Whatever the particular type, legislatures have been increasing their activity of late.

A considerable amount of oversight is performed in the field of education. Much of it, however, is done by special commissions charged with general performance-auditing and program-review responsibilities, and not by education committees or by those designated education leaders.[4] One analysis

of legislative oversight staff agencies in 16 states concentrated on 288 audit-evaluation studies conducted from 1971 through 1976. It found that 20 percent of them dealt with education, whereas 28 percent were on health, welfare and transportation.[5] The California legislature has been a leader in this field. With eight categorical programs slated for termination and renewal in 1981–82, legislative staff is engaged in systematic evaluation, either on its own or with outside consulting firms. For the most part, however, there is not much systematic oversight of educational policies and programs done in most states. Yet, oversight gets done in a less than systematic manner, at least according to what legislator education leaders have to report.

According to them, they engage in oversight in their capacities as individual education leaders. If something seems to be amiss, a legislator education leader will just walk over to the state department of education and say, "What the hell is going on?" A chairman of an education or appropriations committee usually can get the department's attention when something appears to be going wrong. One chairman, from an Eastern state, would try to have the department deal with any problems administratively: "My attitude," he said, "is to give them the chance to do the right thing." If that did not work, he would take the legislative route—with hearings and perhaps legislation. In one instance this particular chairman discovered that the department was permitting credit to be given for correspondence courses in water polo, golf, and wrestling. "Water polo by mail," he remarked waggishly, "must have come in a very soggy envelope." Moreover, he continued in the same vein, "Can you visualize wrestling by mail? You need a pretty long reach." The chairman only had to schedule a hearing to get a change in department of education policy.

Hearings are one of the common oversight mechanisms in education. In one Eastern state, for example, the legislature does not take oversight very seriously, except when the education committee from time to time calls in representatives of the department "to give us a review of what their programs are, what they are doing, and how the programs are operating." In still another state in the East, the education committee had a series of hearings around the state, going into communities and meeting with educators, parents, and students in order to find out how programs were working. A few years ago, the committee on education of the Florida house had gone even further, monitoring education policies and programs through visits and interviews in ten (of the 67) school districts of the state. A staffer in a Western state pointed out that the interim hearings on bilingual education that had been held for the last few years were a major form of oversight: "We would look into what's going on out there, what's working well, and what isn't working."

Frequently the money committees and fiscal staffs will engage in oversight as part of what they do, visiting institutions and facilities for which they have appropriated funds. According to a leader in the Midwest, the legislature conducts far more oversight of this nature in postsecondary than in elementary and secondary education. "We are assuming," he indicated, "that the local board is watching that local school pretty good." The process is not very different in Ohio, where the state controlling board plays a similar oversight role. Listening to an agency request its monthly allotment of funds, a member might very well get his interest aroused and say: "Hey, wait a minute; let's take a look at this; let's put this thing on hold. You guys come back to us with more information." This happens frequently, although not in an organized or formal way.

Except for ad hoc and spasmodic efforts like these, most standing committees with jurisdication over education do little by way of oversight. Program reviews or evaluations rarely get done. A legislator from one of the states of the South describes the difficulty that oversight normally encounters. According to her, "in terms of spending time to develop a real working knowledge of a program, I think the effort has just not been put in." It is rare, she continues, that the education committee of either the senate or the house tackles a major program area such as education and tries to get a handle on it. "You might see a legislative study committee created to look at a problem," she concluded, "but after a month or two they get weary of hearing about it." Education committees, in a few places and on occasion, do take on sustained oversight tasks; but this is the exception, by no means the rule.

Otherwise, it is up to specially constituted legislative groups and their staffs—either the audit-evaluation committees and commissions mentioned above or separate education oversight committees. One of the Midwestern states five years ago established an education review committee, which a legislator refers to as "a happy accident." It was created for narrower reasons, but since has become an oversight committee that examines just how the school finance formula is actually operating. By contrast an educational oversight committee was established only a few years later in a state in the East, but thus far has had little impact. Most recently, however, the chairman has been leading the committee in a philosophical and fundamental exploration of "what our education policy has been and where we ought to go in the future." That is oversight of the most general sort.

However it is defined or perceived, the fact is that not very many legislator education leaders spend a great deal of time on oversight. Top leaders are least likely to do so during the session, while appropriations committee members are most likely. But only one out of four of the total number of legislators

spends a lot of sessional time on the oversight function. Even though the interim normally is the period when most oversight activity takes place the allocation of legislator effort is almost exactly the same; only one out of four on education, education and appropriations, or in top leadership and one out of three on appropriations only, spend a lot of time in this manner.

Constituent service is the final function being considered here. Although such work covers the broadest area, we asked specifically about educational issues and problems that involved legislators in the service function. The education leaders considered here naturally intervene on behalf of their own constituents who need information or help; and, because of their positions in the legislature, they handle problems of a similar sort for constituents of their colleagues. This function occupies less effort during the session, when members are busy processing legislation and appropriating funds. Even so, one out of three of the legislators puts in a lot of time on service activity, with a somewhat higher proportion of education committee members putting in substantial time on this. During the interim, however, constituent service receives more time than does any of the other functions. Nearly two out of three spend a lot of their time between sessions engaged in such activity, with members of education committees somewhat more likely than others to be making an effort here.

Table 22: Functional Priorities of State Legislative Education Leadership—Session

Priority	Concentration of Time on Policy Making or Budget Review by Legislator Education Leaders during Session	
Policy Making	Illinois	New Hampshire
	Pennsylvania	Colorado
	California	Wyoming
	Connecticut	Oregon
	Nevada	Maryland
		Arizona
Budget Review	New York	Utah
	Florida	New Jersey
	Indiana	South Carolina
	Iowa	Arkansas
	Texas	Montana
	Tennessee	Vermont
		Virginia
Both about the same	Oklahoma	Nebraska
	South Carolina	New Mexico
		North Carolina
		Idaho

While it is not possible to be definitive about the functional performance of specific legislatures, some consideration of how each of 30 performs policy making, budget review, and oversight is appropriate. On the basis of the time commitments of individual legislators we can see whether each state allocates more legislative education leadership effort to one function or to another.

In Table 22, which depicts functional priorities during the session, a comparison is made between states that concentrate on policy making and those that concentrate on budget review. Eleven legislatures seem to devote somewhat more time to the policy-making function, while thirteen devote somewhat more to the budget-review function. The other six allocate about the same amount to each function. In Table 23, which depicts functional priorities during the interim, a comparison is made between states that concentrate on policy making and those that concentrate on oversight. Seventeen legislatures focus more on policy making than oversight during the interim; eleven focus more on oversight; and the remaining two divide their efforts about equally. All in all, six states—Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming—stress the policy-making function whether or not the legislature is in session, while another six—Florida, Iowa, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia—stress either budget review or oversight whatever the time of year.

Table 23: Functional Priorities of State Legislative Education Leadership—Interim

Priority	Concentration of Time on Policy Making or Oversight by Legislative Education Leaders during Interim	
Policy Making	Nebraska	Indiana
	Oklahoma	Oregon
	Colorado	New Jersey
	Illinois	South Dakota
	Texas	Arkansas
	Arizona	Wyoming
	Utah	New Mexico
	Pennsylvania	North Carolina
	Vermont	
Oversight	Florida	Maryland
	Connecticut	Iowa
	New York	Idaho
	California	Virginia
	New Hampshire	South Carolina
	Tennessee	
Both about the same	Montana	Nevada

THE PERFORMANCE OF STAFF

Legislative staffs in education are involved in the same functions as the members for whom they work. They, too, participate in making policy, in reviewing the budget and appropriating funds, in conducting oversight, and (to a minor extent) in constituent service. How they allocate their sessional and interim time is shown in Table 24. Included in the table is a comparison between those working in general legislative service agencies and for standing committees on education and those working in fiscal agencies and for appropriations, finance, or ways and means committees. The former we categorize as "policy staff," the latter as "fiscal staff."

Although in surveying legislators and staff we were interested in the same basic functions, for staff we differentiated between two aspects of policy making. First is developing legislation, the more creative role in formulating policies and programs, and second is processing legislation, which includes the more routine business of drafting, analyzing, and amending bills and the related nitty-gritty of the legislative process. During the session one-third of the staffs spend a lot of their time on developing legislation, but nearly a half spend comparable time on processing it. According to an individual from a state in the West, more time may be devoted to processing, "but the quality time is spent on developing legislation." As would certainly be anticipated, it is the policy staff, and not the fiscal staff, that is primarily involved in this function.

Table 24: Functional Performance of Education Staffers

	Percentages Spending A Great Deal of Time				
	Policy Making				
Period and Type of Staff	Developing	Processing	Budget Review	Oversight	Constituent Service
Session					
Policy (N=69)	45	64	15	2	7
Fiscal (N=48)	13	29	84	13	0
Total (N=147)	32	46	40	9	3
Interim					
Policy (N=69)	61	26	5	28	10
Fiscal (N=48)	21	7	33	43	3
Total (N=147)	41	18	14	33	5

In the view of staff, the legislative session is so chaotic that it is difficult to categorize what one is doing. But some specific examples will illustrate the staff role in policy making. Take a typical session day of a staffer working for a higher education committee in a Southern state. He arrives to confront a stack of telephone messages, but before dealing with them he has to fashion agendas for the subcommittees that will be dealing with bills of local interest to members. Then he is lobbied by senior citizens who would like to be able to take free college courses, while he tries to attend to procedural matters that will allow several resolutions and minor bills to proceed and to draft some legislation for other members. Through all of this he must also begin work on a higher education governance plan, because one that was developed during the interim was rejected by the committee. He characterizes his day in the following terms:

> It's like the guy who used to be on the Ed Sullivan Show, who would have the plates on top of the sticks. He'd give one stick a little shake and go to the next one and give that a shake, and then the next one, and so on.

Only the details are different for an education committee staffer from a state in the East. Her committee meets at 10 a.m., so things have to be made ready beforehand. During the meeting, which she has to attend to carefully, lobbyists and reporters pop in and out of the room asking questions about what the committee is doing. After the meeting breaks up, legislators or their aides and members of the partisan staffs come into her office with diverse requests. In the afternoon, when the session starts, she has to look for several legislators on the floor to find out just what they wanted in the bills that they instructed her to draft. All the while she is watching out for potential problems for the state or particular districts, and is prepared to alert committee members to them. Both of these individuals cover just about everything, from developing policies to processing bills.

The policy-making activities of staffers shift markedly during the interim. The day-to-day pressures are much less intense. As compared to a session day, according to one individual, "on an interim day you have the luxury of thinking about tomorrow." Another staffer summed up: "When the legislature isn't in session there is an opportunity to think, to do some work, to catch up, to do the drafting and research that have to be done." Relatively little processing of legislation takes place, with only one out of five staffers spending their time on this. By contrast, more emphasis is placed on developing policies and programs, with two out of five spending their time on that. In the interim, as well as throughout the session, policy making is mainly the business of the policy staff rather than that of the fiscal staff.

The function performed by fiscal staff is naturally that of budget review and appropriations. Two out of five of the staff professionals devote much of their session time to this (as compared to two out of three of the legislator education leaders). The group includes 84 percent of the fiscal staffers and only 15 percent of the policy staffers. A typical day of the persons focusing on the budget and appropriations resembles in general terms that of the person focusing on bills. For example, a fiscal staffer in a Rocky Mountain state arrives at the office at 7:30 a.m., spends half an hour preparing for the committee meeting (including 15 minutes for briefing the chairman). After the committee meeting, which runs from 8 to 11, the next hour is spent "reorganizing everything that got disorganized in committee." The afternoon is spent answering requests from individual legislators and putting together and discussing materials with the committee chairman. When the legislature is not in session, however, little effort is devoted to budget and appropriations. Almost no policy staffers and only one out of three fiscal staffers are very much occupied with this function then.

Legislative oversight receives substantial staff attention during the interim. It is attended to more by staff than by legislators, and in particular by those who work on fiscal matters. By contrast, few staffers spend much time on oversight when the legislature is meeting. Then, the daily stacks of bills and budget analyses command staff energies, forcing oversight to be put on a back burner.

The final function, constituent service, is hardly attended to at all by education staff. Very few fiscal people and only one out of ten policy staffers spend much of their time on such matters. Apparently, when legislators need help on constituent requests and case work that involve schools, they turn to their personal aides or to their caucus staffs rather than to the professionals who work in the field of education.

However their time is allotted and however their work is distributed, education staffers do make a difference in the legislative process. They certainly feel that they do and are generally pleased with the nature of their work and with their accomplishments. There is the learning and the satisfaction that derive from being able to influence policy. Education staffers believe—and properly so—that their role is an important one.* When asked in our survey what impact they thought staff work had on legislative action in the field of education policy, 62 percent of them responded that it had considerable impact and 33 percent answered some impact. Only two percent indicated that staff work had little or no impact, and the rest simply didn't know or wouldn't say.

Staff influence in education is not the same everywhere. It varies structurally among the states. Data from our study can only be considered suggestive on this point, since they are in response to a single question eliciting

attitudes rather than reports on conditions or behavior. But even on this basis, the structure of staff influence merits conjecture. In eighteen of the 30 legislatures we have been able to analyze, staff appears to have a substantial impact. In another seven its impact is moderate and in the remaining four it is only slight.

Several factors—singly or in combination and varying among the states—probably account for the distribution of staff influence that we found.

First is the type of issue. The more technical and complex education issues in a specific place at a particular time, the more likely staff will exert influence. School finance is technical and complex, policy issues less so. Thus, where finance is on the legislative agenda, staff is apt to be playing a critical role. The less salient the issue to constituents, the more likely the staff will be filling the vacuum. Where the issues are emotional, partisan or controversial—as are mandated sex education programs or collective bargaining provisions—the staff role is inclined to be minimal.

Second is the number of education staff leaders in a state. Generally speaking, the larger the number, the more influential they consider themselves to be and probably the more influential they are. Of the eight legislatures with between six and fourteen education staff leaders, six of them—California, Florida, Kansas, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin—rank relatively high on staff impact, while only Maryland and Ohio are in the moderate-impact category. By contrast, of the seven states with only two staff leaders in education, five are in the medium- or lower-impact category and in only two is staff impact considered to be high. It would seem that there is not only safety in numbers, but greater self-confidence and influence as well.

Third, of course, is the nature of the legislature and its membership. The developed legislatures with relatively professional, full-time members, like California, employ larger staffs and rely heavily on them. Legislators in places like these are spread exceedingly thin, and delegate liberally to their staffs. In less developed legislatures staffs are small and legislator reliance on them tends to be less.

CHAPTER 6 NOTES

1. On the role of the courts in determining the agenda for policy making in education, see in particular Richard Lehne, *Quest for Justice* (New York: Longman's, 1978).
2. For a general account of legislator incentives to introduce and enact legislation, see Alan Rosenthal, *Legislative Life* (New York: Harper and Row), Chapter 4.

3. See Winnefred M. Austermann, *A Legislator's Guide to Oversight of Federal Funds* (Denver, Colorado: National Conference of State Legislatures, June 1980).
4. See Alan Rosenthal, "Legislator Behavior and Legislative Oversight," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 6 (February 1981), pp. 115–131.
5. Ralph Craft, "Products of Audit-Evaluation Work," in Richard E. Brown, editor, *The Effectiveness of Legislative Program Review* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 46–49.
6. This section draws on Alan Rosenthal and Susan Fuhrman, "Legislative Education Staffing in the States," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 3 (May-June 1981, forthcoming).

Chapter 7 How They Clash

When a legislator from New England was asked about the degree of conflict over education issues in his state, he replied: "There are some things that zip right through, but precious few of them." Another legislator, a leader from a Midwestern state, explained that: "all issues start off with conflict, because if there was a consensus they would have been settled a hell of a long time ago." Not everything that finds its way to a legislature involves dispute, but some of it surely does. At least sporadic conflict is only to be expected in the field of education, as in most anything else. It need not be intense, widespread, or prolonged; but it is likely to be there. It is the job of the legislature, and of its education leadership, to handle it. That means managing, mediating, and occasionally resolving conflict among disputants—through the legislative processes of deliberation, decision, and catharsis.

There used to be little conflict in the domain of education, particularly in comparison to other policy domains. A comparative analysis of issues in the states in the early 1960s found that education ranked low in conflict—whether partisan, factional, regional, or pressure group. Nor did it seem to have become very conflict-ridden, even by the early 1970s.[1] One of the reasons for this was that the schoolmen, various educational associations, and citizen groups were able to coalesce and collaborate in support of public education.[2] There was not terribly much opposition, not nearly as much as there is at the present time. Not only do some groups today oppose education's interests, at least where taxes and expenditures are involved, but in addition the old coalitions have broken up.[3] Former constituent groups have gone off in their own directions, not always able to reach agreement with one another and occasionally fighting among themselves.

The contemporary educational scene, except in a few places, bears only traces of its earlier unity. In the exceptional cases, such as Utah, consensus continues as the dominant mode. Because of common membership in the Mormon Church, the Utah legislature is fairly cohesive. If the church takes

a position on an educational issue, legislators generally will go along. Elsewhere there is conflict—and if not actual conflict, then the potential for conflict—over all kinds of things. Here, we shall briefly discuss conflict over issues, over resources, and over control. These are conflicts in which legislative education leadership in the states is seriously involved.

WHAT THEY FIGHT OVER

In any policy domain in which government is involved, certain values and certain interests are likely to prevail over others. Education policy is no different. There is competition over issues and between ideas and programs; and legislative education leadership endeavors to settle disputes so that everyone receives at least a small slice of the pie.

Even though the two parties throughout the nation are not at odds on every issue, or even on most of them, partisan division is as characteristic as any other cleavage in American politics. Yet, there is relatively little conflict of a partisan nature over education. Take Pennsylvania, for example. In this highly partisan legislature, where committees are staffed along partisan lines, there is relatively little partisanship on education. That is because the interests of the party, *qua* party, are seldom affected by legislative decisions in the domain of education. And in the many places—especially in the South and West—where parties are neither strong in the state nor salient in the legislature, partisan division on education is even more unlikely to occur.

Frequently, there is fighting—but for political position rather than to advance substantive interests. What happens is that the minority or "out" party makes the majority or "in" party's record in education the issue. The "outs" will take the side of the interest groups asking for more of this or of that. "It's very easy for a minority, whichever minority it is," explained a legislator from the West, "to say there's not enough money being spent on education and yell about having more." Or as a member from a Midwestern state put it, "The minority party will want to spend, and the majority party will have to make responsible decisions." Education in this respect is no different than other policy domains.

In those few places where the parties are relatively ideological in the state and cohesive in the legislature, differences will emerge. Sometimes the difference is over money, with Democrats trying to allocate more money to education (and to government generally) than Republicans. Sometimes the difference is over particular programs, especially those that have ideological implications. Prayer in the schools or legislation to mandate posting the Ten Commandments on classroom walls are always hot issues. State mandates for family life planning programs separate liberals from conservatives; and

insofar as the two ideological groupings coincide with the two political parties, they separate Democrats and Republicans in the legislature.

But in many states ideological issues do not cut along partisan lines. A legislator from a two-party state in the West observed that, if sex education is being proposed, "then all the conservatives are horrified that this is a plot to turn the world over to communism." In his view, those who react feverishly might be in the Republican party, "but I don't look upon them as being Republicans taking that standpoint as such as being conservative." A legislator from a predominantly one-party state in the South made a similar observation. Here, opposition to sex education and related legislation came from fundamentalist groups, who were also fighting ERA and abortion. These groups were strong in rural areas, and consequently had the support of rural legislators, some of whom were Republicans and some Democrats.

Other programmatic issues rarely divide legislatures along partisan lines. On certain programs there is still apt to be a consensus. Vocational education is an example. In many places voc ed is, as one legislator termed it, "sacrosanct." Even if a consensus is absent, as is often the situation when a legislature attempts to define a basic "educational core," there may be no real conflict.

When conflict does occur, one interest is pitted against another. Sometimes local districts are the basic units in the competition, with different alliances forming depending on the particular issue. As described by an Arizona legislator:

> When it comes to school finance it's the 'haves' versus the 'have nots' [but when it comes to] special education you won't find as much of the rich versus the poor. A lot of it depends on the educational philosophy of the district that you represent. [For example] you'll find that Mesa is very conservative when it comes to most educational fields but when it comes to special education, they're into it. . . . But when it comes to bilingual education they won't have a very high percentage of minorities there and so they haven't really gotten into bilingual education that much.[6]

Other times the program itself shapes the interests in support of it. Special education, or education for the handicapped, is an intensely powerful special interest—of professionals, parents, and political representatives. It lays claim to resources that may be claimed by other categorical interests or else would be used for general programs. Conflict, then, is between those with a categorical interest and those with a more general concern. According to a chairman from a Western state, it proceeds as follows:

> One group says, 'we need these special categorical programs because we have kids with these unique needs.' We group them this way and that way,

> and fund it. The other group says, 'you are doing that at the expense of the general curriculum, and if you did it right in the first place you wouldn't need this.'

That sort of debate goes on—back and forth and back and forth.

If elementary and secondary scoools suffer from little conflict over programmatic issues, higher education suffers from virtually none at all. Few legislatures lately have involved themselves in a sustained effort to make policies for higher educational systems in their states or to express concern about whose interests are being served. Most have been much more involved in K-12 than with universities and colleges. And if the football or basketball teams were winning, there certainly was no reason to meddle. The situation, however, is changing today. Legislatures are turning their attention toward postsecondary education, which they had once left pretty much alone. With declining enrollments, rising costs, and diminished resources, the trend is to look hard at postsecondary institutions and especially at the state funds they expend.

WHO GETS HOW MUCH

A former legislator, who is now a top official in the state department of education, noted the increase in controversy throughout the state and in local districts, all of which were reflected in the legislature. "Students are declining, schools are closing, people want costs reduced," is how he summed it up. Money may not be the root of all evil, as has been claimed, but it is at the root of much of the current conflict in contemporary education.

As far as citizens generally are concerned, the overriding issue is how much gets spent, and just how much of what is spent by government gets spent on education. Today there are the few—principally those directly involved in education—who want to devote more, or at least the same amounts, to the schools and the many—principally the taxpayers—who want to cut back. A staffer in a Midwestern state put it as succinctly as possible, "Conflict is over money, with the teachers against the rest." Not only are funds scarce, but now there is a feeling that education's impact is limited. Increasing numbers of legislators, according to a member from the East, harbor "a suspicion that added money does not really help and spending more is just a waste." Perhaps this is merely a rationalization, but it is a convenient one in the current climate.

Related to the overall level of expenditures on education is the emerging battle over the share going to postsecondary as opposed to elementary and secondary education. During the past decades universities and colleges have been treated very well by the states. Legislatures paid little attention to how

much they were spending and on what. A member of the legislature in a Midwestern state explained what had been taking place:

> I'm a relatively well informed legislator, and yet I don't pretend to have anywhere near the grasp of the formula for distributing funds to the universities that I do on primary and secondary education. I think that is indicative of where the focus of legislators is.

The situation has changed of late. Elementary and secondary school interests are resisting higher education's claims on the public purse. They are starting to resent what they believe to be postsecondary's unfair share, which is the result of what they refer to as the proliferation of two-year, four-year, and other institutions throughout the state. Now that the monies are scarce, the competition between levels of education is underway.

Within higher education, there is little agreement today as to who should get how much. Public institutions, especially in states like North Carolina, are jealous of the funds that go to private institutions. The state university normally is at odds with the community colleges. For instance, in a state in the Rocky Mountain region, there is reported to be more conflict between the university and the two-year colleges than between higher and lower education. In the last legislative session, community colleges were cut and the university did well; as a result, according to one member, "the community colleges are now going out to look for people to support their cause in the next election." The lines are similarly drawn in a Midwestern state. Here a Republican senator represents one of the state universities, a Democrat represents the other. The former is a member of the appropriations committee, the latter is chairman. "They take care of their own," is the view of one observer. Among other things this involves working against the community colleges, which are located in every senatorial district. Whether it is four-year versus two-year, it is certainly one campus against another. They are all competing for funds. No legislator wants an institution in his own district to close down or even to have to retrench. Quite the contrary, according to a Midwestern legislator. "Everyone wants a world-renowned major university in his district," she observed, "so there's a constant battling for dollars and for programs."

Within elementary and secondary education, the major conflict also is over money—specifically which districts are going to receive more and which less from the state. The major interests are the constituencies, and the fights are over school finance formulas, with the alliances usually geographical and/or economic in nature. The split may be mainly among urban, suburban and rural districts as in New Jersey, or between wealthy and rural on the one hand and poor and urban on the other, as in Indiana. Or it can be the big

cities versus all the rest of the LEAs (local education agencies) as in California. Nowadays, especially, no legislative district is satisfied with what it receives in formula aid. "First of all, everybody says we don't have enough and second, they say they [others] have more than we have," is how a committee chairman from a Western state perceives the ongoing conflict.

WHO IS IN CONTROL

If some interests are to prevail over others and if some institutions and districts are to receive more resources than the rest, then it matters who is in control. The struggle for power in the domain of education is a continuing one with a number of contests taking place.

First, there is the contest between the state on the one hand and the local units on the other. This contest has been known traditionally as that between state and local control. It is of particular importance in the East, and especially in New England. As one member characterized the situation, "The greatest battleground flies the flag of local control." New Hampshire is a strong believer in keeping the state role to a minimum, and the 400 members of the house who represent a diversity of small districts ensure that localities will control. A basic dispute is between the state department of education and local systems over the mandating of policy through the mechanism of state aid. New Hampshire is one state, however, that believes in as few mandates as possible. In any event, it would be difficult for the state department to exercise direction over the districts. The department itself is fragmented, located in four different buildings in four different physical locations. Another dispute is between the legislature on the one hand and the localities on the other. California's legislature has been dubbed "The Big School Board," because of its intrusive role in education. In a similar vein, the legislature in Massachusetts has been called "The Big School Committee," because of its involvement establishing rules and regulations for both the state department and the school districts.

Second, there is the battle between labor and management to control the means by which salaries and conditions of employment are determined. Collective bargaining is, or has been, a contentious issue in many states. The issue often has forced school boards and administrators' associations out of educational coalitions. It has pitted the teachers against most others, making it more difficult to negotiate educational packages. Disputes over other matters—such as the testing and evaluation of teachers and restrictions on tenure—also flare up from time to time. A few years ago, for instance, the battle over tenure in Ohio was so "bloody" that there were not enough Democrats willing to go on the education committee to fill all the vacancies.

Third, there is the jockeying that goes on within the legislature, involving scattered skirmishes if not out-and-out warfare. Some of this is simply personal. Legislator A dislikes the style of Legislator B, or they both resent the "grandstanding" of Legislator C. Feelings such as these can and do carry over to sponsorship of bills and committee work on legislation. Committees themselves may have jurisdictional disputes with one another, particularly when an appropriations, finance, or ways and means committee appears to be usurping the authority of the committee on education.

Cooperation between the senate and the house is always a problem. At the least, the two bodies are different in composition and nature. As a rule, senates are more individualistic and yet clubbier, while houses are a bit more organized and disciplined. Agreement does not come easily, especially when egos become involved. But on occasion collaboration flourishes. A chairman of an education committee described how it can work:

> _____ and I did almost everything in combination. We simply hit it off well, worked well together. And as a result we had no friction between the two houses when it came to matters of educational policy.

That relationship is a rare one. More likely there is a tension between the two chambers, and an occasional eruption into combat. Intercameral rivalry is normal in and of itself; it becomes heated when there are also disagreements between chambers over the substance of policy.

Take the 1977 issue of school finance and school improvement in California. Two radically different bills were introduced. The chairman of the education committee in the assembly sponsored one; the chairman of the finance committee, who was also a member of education, in the senate sponsored the other. Both bills were endorsed in committee, and the assembly bill was passed on the floor. The senate, instead of voting on its own member's bill, waited for the other chamber's bill to be sent to it. Then the senate education committee deleted every word of the assembly bill and put every word of the senate bill in its place.[5] Rivalry between the chambers is traditional in California, and it is reinforced by the fact that the senate favors general aid while the assembly supports categorical.

In other states the relationship between the two chambers is even more strained. It can be rather tense, and it does not always matter whether the two chambers are under the control of the same or of different parties. As an illustration, in one Midwestern state the senate had traditionally dominated, but in recent years the house assumed command. The reversal of roles has been difficult for old-line senators. Consequently, in the words of a house member, "The house doesn't get along with the senate and the senate doesn't get along with the house."

Fourth, there is the contest for power—in education as elsewhere—between the legislature and the executive. This contest engenders periodic conflict. It is commonly believed that the executive is ascendent in the states. This perception is accurate at least with respect to some states, where the executive branch surely has the upper hand and the legislative branch only rarely struggles to prevail. Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee are such places. But in other places legislatures tend to be dominant, and it is the governor who fights an uphill battle in order for his will to prevail. Arizona, Florida, Idaho, and South Carolina are examples. In the majority of states, at least today, the situation between the governor and the legislature can most accurately be described as a "balance of power," with neither branch clearly dominant over the other and the edge going back and forth. This is the situation in states like California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington in the West, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin in the Midwest, and Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont in New England.[4]

Only a few of the nation's governors today play a predominant part in education policy, although more of them keep a rein on the executive budget. North Carolina is a state where the governor has taken leadership from the legislature, from the state board of education, and from the superintendent of public instruction. The legislature, on its part, is not unhappy with gubernatorial leadership and it cooperates. There is relatively little conflict here. By contrast, in Arizona the legislature traditionally dominated education, but with the current activist governor a power struggle is underway. Elsewhere conflict may be more muted. Ohio's governor cannot get what he wants from the legislature, although he is seldom voted down publicly. Governors in this state, according to one legislative education leader, "have either been a nonfactor or just the kind of factor that you spend brushing out of your hair."

Florida's legislature is as preeminent in the field of education (and in other domains) as any legislature in the country. Although lately it has encountered opposition from the governor, it continues to exercise command in education. Illustrative of its position is a comment made by one of the legislative education leaders in the house. In closing debate on the higher education reorganization bill of 1980, he commended the chairman of the committee for bringing out tough legislation. In taking on the educational establishment, he noted, the committee was taking on the house itself. In other words, the Florida legislature *is* the educational establishment. This is quite understandable when we consider that the directorate of education in the state is interlocking, with the legislature the common link. The governor and the commissioner of education are both former legislators, the former a chairman of the senate education committee and the latter a speaker of the house. The

deputy commissioner used to be staff director of the house education committee, and five former legislative staff directors are now top officials in the state department of education.

Even when the legislature is not as assertive as is Florida's, it may exercise power by default. This is because many contemporary governors steer clear of education. Other issues command their attention. For example, education is not a priority of the governor of Massachusetts. "It's not something he is interested in, it's not something he feels comfortable with," is the way that situation is described. Governors in Maine also seem to have drifted away from the education scene. A legislator there indicates what has been happening:

> It used to be that when a governor was making the state of the state address at the beginning of the legislative session, education would be mentioned first or second. . . . These days, it's not surprising to find out that very frequently you can hear some splendid speeches without hearing education mentioned at all.

The governor's approval of major bills is necessary in New Hampshire; but his interest in education is only sporadic. Then, of course, a governor may be preoccupied with other concerns, as is the present governor of California. He has been busy running for president, and has had a difficult relationship with the legislature. The result, according to one perceptive observer, is that for the past few years education has definitely been "a legislative game." Indeed, in most states and for a variety of reasons, education is much more a legislative game than a gubernatorial one.

Regardless of the governor's role, it is usually the department of education, with the elected or appointed chief and its permanent bureaucracy, that exercises power on behalf of the executive. In some places the department has what has been termed "the strongest voice," even though many people may be involved in education policy. Idaho is an example. Here the education community of teachers, superintendents, and administrators is organized as a coalition that works through the state department and state board. Pennsylvania is not very different. Here the legislature is generally reactive, responding to the interest groups and to the department of education. "Tell us what you want, and let's see if we can accommodate you"—that is the legislature's posture vis-à-vis the education community. There is evidence that the Pennsylvania legislature's role has increased of late; but it is still a secondary one.

In most places, however, the legislature dominates the department, practically usurping the job of the state board of education. In Florida, for instance, the department has survived, but no longer gets to initiate much in

the way of policy. Instead, it is pushed by the legislature toward taking a strong role as overseer of local education programs on the legislature's behalf. Massachusetts, Virginia, and Utah are other such states. And California is certainly one whose legislature is not content with a secondary role. As noted by one member:

> I get the feeling that in many states the impetus for educational legislation comes from educators, from the department of education in the state, and that the laws and the proposals are written there. Then, the legislative body is like a jury sitting in judgment of what educators suggest to them should be the case. That's not our cup of tea.

Actually when it comes to policy for elementary and secondary schools, it is the "cup of tea" of few state legislatures.

Postsecondary education, however, is of another brew. Few legislatures have the same control here as they do in elementary and secondary education. In this area the state board of regents, the department of higher education, or most likely the various institutions pretty much run the show. Even in a state like Mississippi, where the legislature is comparatively strong and the governor comparatively weak, higher education evades legislative control. In California, too, the difference is striking between the state university system, with the prestige and influence of the regents, and elementary and secondary education, with a less imposing state board. On matters affecting elementary and secondary schools the California legislature governs; and it may well impose any idea circulating throughout the nation. This is not so with postsecondary education, where the University of California has great autonomy. Nor is it so with the state and community colleges, where legislative control is somewhat less and operates mainly through the appropriations process.

Generally speaking, higher education has been able to evade the control legislatures have exerted over education at the elementary and secondary levels. Funding is still much of a legislative concern, but most everything else has been left to the regents or department or to the campuses themselves. According to a legislator from one of the Midwestern states, this type of arrangement works well. It has, in his view, the "right combination of control and oversight, and yet institutions have autonomy under their own board of directors." Thus far, and except for efforts to impose a coordinating agency or to reassess roles and missions, conflict has been held to a minimum.

There is little doubt today that the legislative role in education is significant, and the legislature's power is intrusive. Yet, it would not be accurate to say that the legislature completely dominates the field in the states. Others also have a say. Even in California, where the legislature is a major force, it is limited by a variety of contestants:

> There are a thousand school districts out there; and then we have the community college districts as well. Each one is a separate domain with a separate elected board. Here at the state level you have the state department, a state board, and a superintendent of public instruction. There is quite a diffusion of power among these bodies. . . .

That pretty well characterizes the domain of education today—fragmentation, diffuse power, no one in complete control, increasing competition for and conflict over limited resources, but with the legislature holding the key policy position.

NOTES CHAPTER 7

1. Wayne L. Francis, *Legislative Issues in the Fifty States* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967), pp. 20–50; and Wayne L. Francis and Ronald E. Weber, "Legislative Issues in the 50 States: Managing Complexity Through Classification," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 3 (August 1980), pp. 414–417.
2. See, for instance, Stephen K. Bailey, et al., *Schoolmen and Politics* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1962).
3. See JAlan Aufderheide, "Educational Interest Groups and the State Legislature," in Roald F. Campbell and Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr., (eds.), *State Policy Making for the Public Schools* (Berkeley, California: McCutchan, 1976), pp. 195–202.
4. Quoted in Douglas Mitchell, *Social Science Impact on Legislative Decision Making* (Grant No. NIE-G-76-0104, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979), p. 96.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
6. Alan Rosenthal, *Legislative Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), Chapter 11.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

The educational scene in the states underwent only gradual change in the past, but it has been in flux recently. Our study is not designed to capture change; rather, it has focused on education's contours at one point in time, just as the decade of the 1970s was coming to an end. Its objectives have been modest—simply to profile the nation's legislative education leadership population and to map the terrain of the states. We have pursued these objectives in the preceding chapters, and in doing so have uncovered certain patterns that pertain to state legislative education leadership.

First, legislative education leadership is extremely experienced. It includes a large proportion of members who have done work in the field previously and a substantial proportion who are in education now.

Second, it has been continuous, and not just spasmodic. Leaders have stayed with it from one session to the next, and over the course of extended time.

Third, it is senior, particularly as compared to the membership of the legislature as a whole. Thus, it is composed of earlier generations of legislators, and not relative newcomers.

Fourth, it devotes considerable time and energy to legislative service and, within that service, it concentrates its efforts on education.

Fifth, it focuses mainly on fiscal matters, such as funding formulas and appropriation levels for elementary and secondary schools and appropriations for higher education.

Sixth, it is exercised primarily by those whose legislative jurisdictions give them power over money. That is to say, education leaders tend to serve on the money committees—appropriations, finance, and ways and means—as well as on education committees.

Seventh, and following from the above, education leadership devotes as much of its energy to the function of reviewing budgets and appropriating funds for education as it does to the function of making policy for education.

Eighth, its major relationship outside of the legislature is with the state department of education, from whom it obtains data, with whom it maintains

contact, but upon whom it is no longer as dependent as it once was.

Ninth, it is linked to organizations and groups outside the state, although by no means tightly so, and for general legislative rather than strictly education-policy purposes.

Tenth, it is engaged in trying to resolve or mediate a number of conflicts, and most critically over who gets how much money and who exercises what kind of control.

Eleventh, professional staff has played an important role in the conduct of state legislative education leadership; although its interests naturally differ from those of legislators it serves.

THE CHANGING SCENE

Although our analysis has made some comparisons, particularly between legislators and staff, it has attempted only little by way of explanation and less by way of prediction. In these concluding comments, however, we can venture some distance beyond the data reported here. We shall briefly link past to present and speculate about the prospects for legislative education leadership that lie ahead.

Significant change has been taking place and is still underway in the states. It involves both education as a policy domain and the legislature as a political institution. And it is not likely that what is now going on will soon be reversed.

As important as anything else is the altered public climate in which education finds itself. People are discontented; their confidence in government has eroded; the resources are not there for the asking; and politicians are troubled. Education has been replaced in the center ring of the public arena, and it no longer is the odds-on favorite for preferential treatment by government. This is not the case everywhere. Despite increasing skepticism nationwide, the people of Utah value highly their educational institutions. Overall, the public here is still supportive of education. But Utah is exceptional.

Indicative of the new climate are the remarks of a legislator from New England who spoke for more than those in his state or even region when he noted education's fall from grace. "In earlier years anybody who stood up on the floor and tried to cut an educational dollar would live forever in purgatory," he said. "But that doesn't seem to be the case anymore." Consensus has become conflict. A cohesive community of schoolmen is no longer around. The coalition is now in pieces, with particularistic interests dominating the more general ones. Categorical programs, college campuses, school districts, and of course teachers all are in the competition for limited monies—and in a tough public environment.

Nor will the federal government be of much help in the future. Although there is some money for education now, there will be less in the period ahead. Under President Reagan, functions being performed or financed by the federal government will most likely devolve to the states. If anything, the crunch in state capitals will be tighter and the pressures on legislatures in the field of education will be greater.

Meanwhile, the legislature as an institution has undergone substantial change, and is still undergoing it. Starting in the 1960s and extending into the following decade, most of the nation's legislatures were "reformed." Not all of the results of the reformation have proved beneficial, but at the very least legislatures were modernized and their capacity was enhanced. They became more independent and more assertive and began to play a greater role in the governance of education in their states. In most places they became the predominant institutions of government as far as education policy was concerned. Yet, the institutional resurgence of state legislatures may well be short lived. Just as they appeared to be gaining in strength and taking grasp of education, the legislature as an institution was starting to show strain. Suffering from the same pressures and conflicts that have weakened public and private institutions generally, legislatures seem to be in trouble. They, too, are suffering from the contemporary rise of individualism and decline of authority and from society's increasing fragmentation.[1]

THE NEW LEADERSHIP

However turbulent the education environment and however chaotic the legislative arena, through the years a measure of stability has been provided by those legislators identified in this study as education leaders. They are experienced and skillful people, and have been around for some time; up to now they have sustained their commitment to education policy. Because of changing times, they have played a special and critical part in trying to hold things together, and have managed well. But many of the present-day education leaders, with their roots in the past, will not be at it much longer. Theirs is a relatively old generation. More than half are in their fifties and only one out of six is under forty. And in twenty-five of the states the average age is in the fifties. At least half of them are planning to leave legislative service relatively soon, and even more of them will probably do so.

In a few years not many of today's education leaders will be left in the legislature. The turnover of generations will come suddenly; it is now at hand. What about the future, after they leave? What is likely to happen? Who will comprise the new generation of legislative education leadership and what difference will the changing of the guard make?

Hardly any legislators are apprenticing in education policy today, seeking places of policy leadership in the field. Apprenticeship is no longer necessary in most places. Thus, there is no new generation of leaders, prepared and waiting in the wings for their chance on stage. They are just not there. Right now, few of the newer members of legislatures have much of an interest in education. The area is no longer sexy and, in the words of one member, "there are no goodies to hand out like years ago." Education does not have the popular support it once had and the state no longer has additional monies to spend. The age of educational growth and reform is over. It is no longer a matter of adding on, but one of redistribution. Even in states like California, programs seem to be taking second place to constituency interests and fiscal retrenchment.

Some legislators may have an interest in educational issues, but they shy away from the area because things are becoming too emotional and too conflict-ridden for their tastes. "They don't want to be put on the hot seat," is the way one member put it. Another member, from a Rocky Mountain state, pointed out that education is losing its luster as far as reelection is concerned. And because of the declining enrollment and the public's mood on taxes, he added, "I think that education probably is a dangerous place to be right now." Not only is education getting too hot for many newcomers to handle, but it is becoming more and more frustrating. "You spend a lot of time, an awful lot of time working on a formula that you think is heading in the right direction," explained a member from a Midwestern state, "but it simply doesn't work in terms of giving money to the right school districts." As education loses its appeal, other issues are becoming sexier politically and more manageable legislatively.

Younger members who are drawn to education, have a much different perspective from their elders. The latter came of legislative age at a time when education was positively regarded and seen as the solution to many of society's problems. Their potential successors, however, have come of legislative age during a period when public attitudes are more negative—toward education as well as everything else. The contemporary generation, in just about every place, is rather jaded; its involvement, its support, and its devotion to the subject will be far more limited than that of its predecessors.

Not many of the newer people have any interest in education, and according to a veteran from New England, "It's disturbing as hell." But it is possible to pull one or two junior members in, develop their interest, and bring them along. The problem is that few of the most talented members of today's generation stay in one place for very long. They are peripatetic, moving from one policy to another as their interests shift. They are also ambitious, moving from one office to the next as opportunities open up. An education leader from a Midwestern state described the dilemma:

> I've lined up a couple of good people and had them start to really get into it [school finance] and we've lost them for one reason or another. We've got young _____ who has been nominated for county commissioner. He was ready to become a true specialist, and he was also the ranking member of the ways and means committee. I've had a number of people I've tried to guide in that way. Either because of mobility or lack of interest, it just didn't work out.

In becoming more discontinuous and unstable, leadership in education is getting to resemble that in other policy domains and in the legislature as a whole.

Despite its diminishing appeal, there will always be some recruits to education leadership. They may not be quite the same as in the past. Rather, they are likely to come more disproportionately than previously from the ranks of educators. More school teachers and college professors are running for legislative office and being elected. These educator-legislators have an interest—professional as well as political—in education, and it is understandable that they would choose to pursue that interest when in office. It is natural, therefore, that they will seek appointment to education committees, and perhaps to the fiscal committees as well.

There is reason to believe that the ongoing trend toward a larger proportion of educators in legislative education leadership did not develop overnight; it began several years ago. In comparing the duration of legislative service of those current leaders with and those without educational occupations, we can observe sharp contrasts. Of those who are educators by profession (about one-quarter of the total), 80 percent have served less than ten years in the legislature, while 20 percent have been in longer. But of those who are not educators, only 47 percent have less than ten years of service, while 53 percent have served longer. In other words, the educators among our leaders entered the ranks of legislative education leadership rather recently—mainly during the past decade, as more educators were being elected to legislative office.

This trend will undoubtedly continue, and it is likely that more education leaders in the future will have school or college employment in their immediate past. However, the lawyers, the farmers, and the assorted types of businessmen—the generalists—who once gravitated to education because of its public import and then stuck with it for years, will have departed from the scene. They will not be replaced by their own kind. Most of the people taking their places will either be educators themselves or those coming into the legislature with clients to represent, programs to advance, and an "axe to grind." As a member from an Eastern state speculated about members of the new generation, "They will want to move quickly to pass things for the

groups they are representing." The handicapped, the vocational, the bilingual, the disadvantaged, the gifted—all will have their spokesmen and their sponsors. In addition, a few of the people taking the places of the old generalists may explicitly represent taxpayer discontents, reflective of the mandate given them at the time of their election to the legislature. Overall, however, legislative education leadership of the future is likely to be dominated—more than presently and much more than in the past—by educators themselves and by representatives of particularistic and categorical educational interests.

However specialized their backgrounds, these people will not remain untouched by legislative service. They will change and broaden, and the longer they remain at it the less inclined they will be to reflect their pre-legislative experiences or the specific interests they first represented.

Still, there is the possibility that the new leaders will be more parochial than the old ones. Members of the earlier generation—including those who were part-time lawyers and businessmen—were willing to spend their governmental careers in the state legislature. Members of the new generation want to win to higher elective office or move to other governmental positions. They are more likely than their predecessors to look ahead to and be dependent upon the public sector for employment. There is also the possibility that if education's leadership is too narrowly based, it will lose credibility it now has and may become removed from the mainstream of the legislative process.

In those states where leadership is more diverse and broadly based, there will probably be considerable instability. Legislators will not remain in the field of education very long, and certainly not for a decade or two as did their predecessors. In these places, and elsewhere too, staff will come to play a more important role. Fiscal and policy staffers will exhibit greater continuity than the legislators whom they serve. New legislative education leaders will come to depend on their memories as well as on their expertise. There is the possibility here that professionals will wind up making decisions for politicians. And whatever their backgrounds and wherever their roots, a number of these professionals have committed their futures to the field of education. They look forward to careers in the community of education policy, but not necessarily in the legislature itself.

Whatever the pattern state by state, the general shape of legislative education leadership will be different tomorrow than today or yesterday. The challenges to leadership are tremendous, as was well stated by a legislator from Hawaii:

> We—the legislative leaders in education policy—are increasingly pressed into the conflicting roles of advocates, brokers, mediators, auditors, and maybe

> even deans of academic affairs by a public that is demanding fair value for its tax dollars in education. . . .[2]

In view of the challenges, her conclusion was that we needed to strengthen our leadership in education policy.

That may well be the need, but the strengthening of such leadership is by no means the immediate prospect. Fewer legislators will attempt to exercise leadership in education, and those who do may be discounted because of their obvious interests. Even if leaders somehow do emerge, there is another problem. Members will be less inclined than previously to follow them. A majority leader from New England lamented how "individual legislators don't follow you, not now." According to him, "Some of the 'turkeys' will follow, because they don't know where the hell to go. But there isn't too much of that anymore."

Today there are fewer leaders and fewer followers in legislatures or anywhere else. The individual leaders and the leadership structures that we have surveyed in this study have been changing gradually in the past and will probably undergo greater transformation in the immediate future. The educational enterprise will go on, policy will still be made, and funds will continue to be allocated for elementary, secondary, and higher education. But the state of state legislative education leadership will not be the same again. Whether we like it or not, its membership will have changed and its strength will be diminished.

NOTES CHAPTER 8

1. See Alan Rosenthal, "Separate Roads: The Legislator as an Individual and the Legislature as an Institution," *State Legislatures* (March 1979), pp. 21–25.
2. Senator Patricia Saiki, quoted in Bice Clemow, "Education: A Tough Assignment," *Congress* (Winter 1978), p. 28.